COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
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Research & Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Jim Baird
Full Committee Hearing Statement
"Artificial Intelligence: Societal and Ethical Implications"
Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 10:00 a.m.

Chairwoman Johnson, thank you for holding today's hearing on the societal and ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI).

In the first half of the 20th century, the concept of artificial intelligence was the stuff of science fiction. Today it is reality.

Since the term AI was first coined in the 1950s, we have made huge advances in the field of artificial *narrow* intelligence.

Narrow AI systems can perform a single task like providing directions through Siri or giving you weather forecasts. This technology now touches every part of our lives and every sector of the economy.

Driving the growth of AI is the availability of big data. Private companies and government have collected large data sets, which, combined with advanced computing power, provide the raw material for dramatically improved machine learning approaches and algorithms.

How this data is collected, used, stored, and secured is at the heart of the ethical and policy debate over the use of AI.

AI has already delivered significant benefits for U.S. economic prosperity and national security.

But it has also demonstrated a number of vulnerabilities, including the potential to reinforce existing social issues and economic imbalances.

As we continue to lead the world in advanced computing research, a thorough examination of potential bias, ethics, and reliability challenges of AI is critical to maintaining our leadership in this technology.

The United States must remain the leader in AI, or we risk letting other countries who don't share our values drive the standards for this technology.

To remain the leader AI, I believe Americans must also understand and trust how AI technologies will use their data.

The Trump Administration announced earlier this year an Executive Order on "Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence."

Last week the Administration's Select Committee on AI released a report that identifies its priorities for federally funded AI research.

I am glad that the Administration is making AI research a priority.

This is an effort that is going to require cooperation between industry, academia and federal agencies.

In government, these efforts will be led by agencies under the jurisdiction of this Committee, including NIST, NSF and DOE.

We will learn more about one of those research efforts from one of our witnesses today, Dr. Georgia Tourassi, the founding Director of the Health Data Sciences Institute (HDSI) at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Dr. Tourassi's research focuses on deploying AI to provide diagnoses and treatment of cancer.

Her project is a good example of how cross-agency collaboration and government data can responsibly drive innovation for public good. I look forward to hearing more about her research.

Over the next few months, this Committee will be working towards bipartisan legislation to support a national strategy on Artificial Intelligence.

The challenges we must address are how industry, academia, and the government can best work together on AI challenges, including ethical and societal questions, and what role the federal government should play in supporting industry as it drives innovation.

I want to thank our accomplished panel of witnesses for their testimony today and I look forward to hearing what role Congress should play in facilitating this conversation.