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Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation

Hearing on “Toward an AI-Ready Workforce”

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A 2020 World Economic Forum study found that AI-generated machines could disrupt an estimated 85 million jobs globally by next year. Though that may sound scary, the study also suggested that AI adoption could create as many as 97 million new positions. AI must be a tool used to enhance the job, not replace the worker. If done right, we can create a new job sector that equitably spreads the benefits of AI to all parts of society while remaining a global technological leader.

One requirement necessary for the United States to remain a global leader in AI is to build and invest in a robust workforce and talent pipeline that draws from every corner of the American educational system. We must prepare future technologists from the moment they enter elementary school and attract talent from all places, including community colleges, four-year colleges, and trade schools. That is why I co-led the Chance to Compete Act with Ms. Foxx, which would allow agencies to hire based on one’s ability to do the job. We believe the federal government should reward those based on merit rather than affiliation. Giving people the opportunity to retrain and reskill into new fields and professions based on achievement and ability will help unlock massive amounts of unrealized talent within our communities.

To remain competitive with the private sector, the federal government must nurture its own talent pipeline. One way we can do that is to provide students with the opportunity to participate in meaningful paid internships. Much of the private sector, including large firms like IBM, Microsoft, Google, and NVIDIA are already getting this right. The federal government must model these internship programs and find ways to get great talent into agencies whether it is for a quick stint or a lifelong career. Even a short time in the government can be valuable and provides an opportunity to share knowledge between both the public and private sector.

My legislation, the Building the Next Generation of Federal Employees Act (NextGenFeds Act), which I plan to reintroduce, would do just that through increasing the availability and quality of paid internships across the enterprise of government. I hope this is a source of bipartisan interest on the Committee as we work to reintroduce this legislation in the coming weeks.

We also cannot forget about our current federal employees and must provide them with technical and conceptual AI training resources. The President’s EO makes it clear - knowing how to use technology can be great, but knowing how to use technology responsibly is paramount. That is why I co-led the AI Training Expansion Act, with Chairwoman Mace, which would expand the access and curriculum of these educational programs to employees up and down the organizational chart. We must make this training more than just an AI awareness exercise and ensure that such training enables employees to harness the power of AI to do their jobs smarter, faster, and to greater effect.

Another way the government could benefit from AI is through joint ventures between the public and private sector that drive toward collaborative solutions. Many have likened the AI revolution to the next

space race, which is why Congress created the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource Task Force in 2020 to explore ways to effectively foster AI research and applications. Among the findings in the task force's [January 2023 final report](#), was the need to increase the diversity of talent in AI by, quote, “supporting the needs of researchers and students from diverse backgrounds who are pursuing foundational, use-inspired, and translational AI research.” The report recommended that we look for this talent in academic institutions, non-profit organizations, startups, and small businesses.

President Biden’s fiscal year 2023 budget requested \$1.8 billion in non-defense research and development related to AI, including successful public-private partnerships. The budget also sought funding for critical resources for the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, the National AI Research Institutes, and federal agencies as they implement the Administration’s recent, groundbreaking AI directives. These bodies are responsible for developing guidelines for AI evaluations and red teaming, promoting ethical and trustworthy AI systems and technologies, and contributing to innovative solutions that address climate change, expand our understanding of the brain, or enhance education and public health.

We must invest in educational resources and teachers who can help students prepare for the future and help employers identify those who will lead the AI workforce and AI innovation. We need a workforce that will use AI ethically and equitably, ensuring AI is used to benefit American families, communities, and businesses across the entire country. I look forward to a productive discussion with our witnesses today, specifically on how we can better prepare—not replace—our current workforce for the possibilities of AI.

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