

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

The Honorable James Inhofe, Chairman
Armed Services Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman
Armed Services Committee
US House of Representatives

The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science &
Transportation
United States Senate

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
US House of Representatives

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
Armed Services Committee
US House of Representatives

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
& Transportation
United States Senate

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
US House of Representatives

Dear Members of Congressional Leadership, Committee Chairs and Ranking Members,

By enacting forward-looking Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategies, China and the European Union are racing to become global leaders in an area that will determine competitive advantage for decades to come.

The House and Senate have each acted on AI legislation in the 116th Congress and now have a unique opportunity to cement the United States' leadership by including in The National AI Initiative (NAII) in the National Defense Authorization Act, a national strategy to advance AI programs to support America's students, researchers, workers, and entrepreneurs.

Bipartisan leadership in the House and Senate at the start of the 116th Congress established the National Security Commission on AI, whose findings and recommendations are reflected in the National AI Initiative. As Congressional leaders on AI have noted, AI affords immense opportunities to change the world for the better and to transform society, the economy, and the government in dramatic ways. The US must remain a global leader in the development of this technology, as its 'near limitless' applications are becoming essential in the public and private sectors.

We thank the Members of the House and Senate who have led the charge to bring us to this moment of opportunity and we urge Congress to seize the moment by ensuring that the measure is retained in the National Defense Authorization Act in Conference.

The National AI Initiative would expand research in AI as well as AI education throughout the talent pipeline and provide a clear plan for coordinating research across the federal government.

Key elements of the NAI include the creation of strategic research centers across the federal science agencies, with an emphasis on public/private collaboration and accelerating technology transfer. The legislation supports research and program development for K-12 STEM and post-secondary education as well as innovative efforts to improve and accelerate workforce training.

To ensure that all regions of the nation can engage in AI innovation, the legislation would launch a public-private effort to establish a national research cloud. Finally, the NAI fuses innovation with a focus on the societal impacts of AI. The legislation directly supports research in ethical and trustworthy AI and assessments of how advances are impacting employment and careers in communities across the nation.

Accelerating innovation in AI will be vital to reigniting the American economy. Our nation needs to speed innovations that can provide AI tools to farmers, teachers, factory workers, and doctors and nurses, along with the education and training that empowers them to put these breakthroughs to work. The bold leadership of this Congress has created an opportunity to take an important step to advance American leadership in AI research, innovation, and education.

We respectfully urge you to bring the bold leadership of this Congress to fruition by retaining the NAI in the National Defense Authorization Act and enacting it this year.

Sincerely,

Allen Institute for AI

American Statistical Association

ASME

Association for Advancing Automation

Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)

Brown University

Carnegie Mellon University

Computing Research Association

Cornell University

Duke University

Future of Life Institute

Georgia Institute of Technology

Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

Harvard University

IEEE-USA

Indiana University

Johns Hopkins University

National Center for Women and Information Technology

Penn State University

Semiconductor Industry Association

Stanford University

TechNet

The University of Massachusetts Amherst

UCLA

University of California San Diego

University of California System

University of Colorado Boulder

University of Florida

University of Pennsylvania

University of Washington

Yale University