FORWARD PROGRESS USA

Five AI Legislative Priorities for the 120th Congress

November 2026

The 120th Congress convenes January 3, 2027 and runs through January 3, 2029. Every bill pending in the 119th Congress will expire unless reintroduced, so each priority below describes a call to action for the introduction or reintroduction of legislation that puts these priorities into place.

We have created five core priorities that fulfill the following criteria:

Congress is the right actor

National AI legislation is a societal priority. Fragmented regulation and sparse funding are not sufficient to ease our transition into a world centered on this technology. For all of the following issues, Congress wields the funding and authority to most effectively solve the problem.

The evidence of the problem is real

In an age of misinformation, selective storytelling and biased media, arguments over which issues are the most urgent only increase. Our policy priorities aim to tackle the most urgent and evidence-backed issues facing the country.

These solutions reflect the values of our organization

People First, Safety by Design, Broad Prosperity, Freedom to Innovate and Public Readiness

These are the values that we have previously described as our guiding principles. Together, the priorities listed in this document aim to further each of these goals.

The following priorities are listed in no particular order.

Priority 1: National Frontier Model Safety Baseline

As frontier AI systems rapidly advance in capability and autonomy, the risks of severe, large-scale harm are no longer theoretical. We strongly and actively encourage the 120th Congress to pass a comprehensive piece of legislation that creates a national standard for the regulation of our country's most advanced AI systems.

Fractured, state-by-state rules increase compliance costs for firms and do not always ensure safety and best practices.

By establishing a clear safety baseline, Congress can enforce these rules upon all firms in the AI space, effectively minimizing most of the catastrophic risks associated with advanced models. These risks include cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, chemical and biological weapons, autonomous loss of control and cascading systemic failures.

This priority aligns most closely with our second principle of Safety by Design. By encouraging firms to innovate in a safe, low-risk way, we can ensure that the benefits of AI are reaped by many, while reducing the risk of widespread harm.

If done effectively, this bill should strike a balance between safety and our fourth principle of Freedom to Innovate. Overregulation that slows down innovation hurts more than it helps, and finding the equilibrium between both these values is the most important way we can smoothly transition into an AI-centric future.

119th Congress Precedent

Lawmakers in the 119th Congress laid critical bipartisan groundwork for federal frontier oversight, including:

- **The FRONTIER Act** (H.R. 9925)**:** Introduced by Reps. Jay Obernolte (R-CA) and Lori Trahan (D-MA) to establish a tiered, risk-based federal oversight framework for the most capable AI models (anchored at 10^{26} compute operations), requiring transparency reporting, independent third-party verification, and emergency restriction authority.
- **The AI Emergency Button Act** (S. 5417 / H.R. 10567): Bipartisan legislation requiring frontier developers to maintain the technical capability to rapidly slow down or shut off models in a loss-of-control scenario.

Call to Action for the 120th Congress

In the 120th Congress, lawmakers should reintroduce and pass a unified National Frontier Model Safety Baseline that meets these requirements:

- **Mandates Pre-Deployment Safety Evaluations**

    - Developers of frontier models should undergo rigorous pre-deployment testing for catastrophic risks such as cyberattacks, biological threats and loss of control. Testing should be accredited by third-party auditors.
- **Requires Rapid Incident Reporting and Emergency Kill Switches**
    - Mandate that frontier developers report critical safety incidents to federal authorities within 72 hours. Maintain verifiable technical mechanisms to halt runaway systems.
- **Protects Whistleblowers**
    - Establish anti-retaliation protections and void non-disclosure agreements for AI employees who report significant safety concerns or violations of preexisting regulatory laws.
- **Balances Federal Standards with Targeted Preemption**
    - Create one clear national standard. Eliminate state-by-state developer mandates to lower compliance costs and help support quick, safe development.

Priority 2: AI Job-Impact Reporting

Artificial intelligence will serve as the largest shock to the labor market in history.

In the past, economic innovation promoted human specialization and critical thinking. Those very qualities can now be replicated, and the value humanity provides in an AI-centric job market is unclear. That's why it is so crucial that Congress acts soon. Right now it is imperative that we thoroughly understand the effects of AI on mass layoffs and unemployment trends.

The exact federal action we are proposing is a national AI job-impact reporting requirement.

Large employers and federal agencies would report to the Department of Labor, on a quarterly basis, how many jobs AI has eliminated, created, or left unfilled, along with how many workers were retrained. The Department of Labor would then compile this into a public report to Congress. Having this data is just the first step in protecting workers from the dangers of mass unemployment, but it still serves as a crucial priority for the 120th Congress.

AI job-impact reporting aligns most clearly with our principle People First. The purpose of artificial intelligence should be to serve, assist and benefit the people. The economic surplus of this transformative innovation must serve the general public, and not just the firms that deploy it. Congress plays a crucial role in preventing the mass unemployment that could result from this technology, and understanding the true extent and causes of the disruption now is vital.

119th Congress Precedent

Lawmakers in the 119th Congress began laying groundwork for AI workforce transparency, including:

- **The AI-Related Job Impacts Clarity Act** (S. 3108): Introduced by Sens. Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Mark Warner (D-VA), this bipartisan bill would require major companies and federal agencies to report AI-related layoffs, hiring changes, and job displacement to the Department of Labor.

Call to Action for the 120th Congress

In the 120th Congress, lawmakers should pass a unified AI Job-Impact Reporting framework that meets these requirements:

- **Requires Regular Employer Reporting**
    - Large employers should report on a quarterly basis the number of positions eliminated, reduced, created, or substantially changed due to AI adoption.
- **Builds Public Data Infrastructure**

    - Direct the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to compile, standardize, and publish aggregated, anonymized data so researchers, states, and the public can track trends by industry and region.
- **Protects Small Businesses and Sensitive Information**
    - Exempt small businesses, protect trade secrets and individual employee privacy, and keep reporting templates simple to limit compliance costs.
- **Connects Data to Action**
    - Require periodic reports to Congress with findings and recommendations, so the data informs workforce training, unemployment support, and education policy.

Priority 3: Data Center Cost-Shifting Ban

The heavy costs incurred by data centers should be paid for solely by the firms using them, and not by the hardworking Americans and small business owners who share the grid.

Innovation in artificial intelligence has driven a rapid buildout of data centers all across the country. In an effort to compete and thrive in the industry, AI companies have quickly expanded their computing capacity. However, that expansion has come at the cost of strained power grids and rising electricity bills for the communities around them.

Data centers, and by extension AI, use a staggering amount of resources. The energy, water, and land required to run these facilities are extremely large, and the burden they place on everyday people is unfair. When a data center's energy demand grows too large, utilities must make swift upgrades and expansions to the grid. When utilities spread the cost of new power generation, transmission, and grid upgrades across all customers, ordinary households end up subsidizing the infrastructure of some of the world's most profitable companies.

This is called cost-shifting, and it is one of the most apparent inequities of the AI market today.

Congress must act quickly on this issue. At a time of economic hardship, increasing utility bills and rising costs of living are squeezing families and small businesses that can least afford them.

No household should have to pay more to power the world's largest technology companies. A clear national standard would ensure that the firms driving this growth cover the cost of the power they need.

This initiative aligns with our principles of People First and Broad Prosperity. When everyday Americans subsidize the rapid growth of AI, the benefits flow to the largest corporations while the costs fall on the public. AI should serve the people, and its gains should be shared broadly.

119th Congress Precedent

Lawmakers in the 119th Congress showed bipartisan concern that AI data center growth should not raise household electricity bills, including:

- **The Ratepayer Protection Act** (H.R. 9340): Introduced by Reps. Gabe Evans (R-CO) and Kathy Castor (D-FL), this bill would amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) to direct state utility regulators to consider a standard requiring data centers of 100 MW or more to cover the full incremental cost of the generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades needed to serve them. The House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced it 52-0, and it has since passed the House.
- T**he Protecting Families from AI Data Center Energy Costs Act** (H.R. 6529): Introduced by Rep. Greg Landsman (D-OH), this bill would shift data center

interconnection and grid upgrade costs away from residential and small-business customers.

- **The Power for the People Act** (H.R. 8241): Led by Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) in the House and Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) in the Senate, this bill would promote data center load queues and data center-specific rate classes to protect other electricity consumers.
- **The Ratepayer Protection Pledge**: A voluntary White House commitment, first signed in March 2026 by Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft, OpenAI, Oracle, and xAI, to pay for their own power generation and grid upgrades. It has since expanded to include utilities, cooperatives, data center developers, and 23 governors.

Call to Action for the 120th Congress

In the 120th Congress, lawmakers should finish this work and pass a binding Data Center Cost-Shifting Ban that meets these requirements:

- **Makes Large Data Centers Pay Their Own Way**
  - Require large data center operators to cover the full cost of the generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades their facilities require. Costs should not be passed on to households, small businesses, or other ratepayers.
- **Guards Against Stranded Costs**
  - Require long-term contracts, minimum-demand charges, or financial assurances so ratepayers are not left holding the bill if projected demand never materializes or a facility closes early.
- **Codifies the Voluntary Pledge**
  - Turn the White House Ratepayer Protection Pledge from a voluntary commitment into an enforceable national standard, so protections do not depend on which companies sign on.
- **Targets the Rule Narrowly and Respects State Authority**
  - Define covered facilities by electrical load, as H.R. 9340 does, so manufacturers and other industrial users are not swept in. Keep rate-setting with state regulators, as many states already have large-load tariffs.

Priority 4: Control Over AI Technologies Harming Children

Children are growing up in a world where AI chatbots are always accessible and designed to keep them engaged. Millions of young people now use these tools for homework help, advice and companionship.

Yet despite this widespread usage and access, chatbots remain federally unregulated and potentially dangerous. In documented cases, these technologies have introduced children to sexually explicit content, encouraged self-harm and fostered emotional dependency. In an effort to maximize engagement, some companies have built products that put a child's attention ahead of a child's safety.

Children cannot be expected to recognize or resist manipulation by systems built to be persuasive, and parents are often unable to see what their children are being told.

Today, protections vary widely from company to company and state to state, leaving families to rely on voluntary promises. Congress must act quickly to set clear national standards and ensure the safety of young people.

This priority aligns most clearly with our principles of People First and Public Readiness. AI should serve people, and its protections for the most vulnerable should be built into products from the start. Regulations also help prepare the public for this technology, so that families, schools, and communities are not left to face its dangers on their own.

119th Congress Precedent

Lawmakers in the 119th Congress moved quickly on AI chatbots and children, including:

- **The GUARD Act** (S. 3062 / H.R. 8623): Introduced by Sens. Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), with a House companion from Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT). The bill would ban AI companions for minors, require chatbots to verify users' ages and disclose that they are not human, and impose criminal penalties on companies whose chatbots solicit minors for sexually explicit conduct or encourage self-harm or violence. The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced it unanimously on April 30, 2026.
- **The CHATBOT Act** (S. 4407): Introduced by Sens. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Brian Schatz (D-HI), John Curtis (R-UT), and Adam Schiff (D-CA). The bill would require "family accounts" so parents can consent to and oversee their children's chatbot use, limit manipulative design features, and prohibit targeted advertising to minors. The Senate Commerce Committee advanced it with unanimous support.

Call to Action for the 120th Congress

In the 120th Congress, lawmakers should pass a single bipartisan child safety framework for AI that meets these requirements:

- **Bans Harmful Chatbot Conduct Toward Minors**
    - Prohibit AI systems from soliciting minors for sexually explicit conduct or encouraging self-harm, suicide, or violence, with meaningful penalties for companies that knowingly allow it.
- **Requires Clear Disclosures and Age-Appropriate Design**
    - Require chatbots to state that they are not human and not licensed professionals. Limit manipulative engagement features that foster emotional dependency in children.
- **Puts Parents in Control**
    - Require family accounts with parental consent for younger users, parental controls, and a ban on targeted advertising to minors.
- **Protects Privacy and Preserves Beneficial Uses**
    - Keep age assurance and data collection to the minimum needed. Allow safe educational and learning uses of AI so children are protected without losing its benefits.

Priority 5: Largest Investment in AI Literacy

AI literacy will become a foundation of daily life during the AI era. Investing in it now is how we can ensure that every American can understand, use and benefit from this technology.

Without widespread literacy, the advantages of this technology will go solely to the most experienced and technically advanced, while students and everyday workers are left behind.

Literacy also provides protection. Those who understand how to use AI are better able to spot its mistakes and avoid its harms. Educating the public about AI now is a way to uplift Americans of every class and strengthen our country as a whole.

Now is the time. The 120th Congress is the perfect window for investments in AI literacy, as AI is entering classrooms, workplaces, and homes faster than schools and communities can prepare for it. Students are using these tools before they are taught how to use them well, and workers are being asked to adapt without the training to do so.

No school district or state can close this gap alone. Congress has the funding and authority to set national standards and bring AI literacy to every community, especially those that are under-resourced.

That is why we are calling on the 120th Congress to make the largest federal investment in AI literacy in American history.

This investment in AI literacy aligns with our principle of Public Readiness. A prepared public is one that can use AI with confidence, recognize its risks, and take part in discussions about how it affects their lives. By investing in AI literacy now, Congress has the opportunity to ensure Americans are ready for both the opportunities and the risks of this technology.

119th Congress Precedent

Lawmakers in the 119th Congress began laying the groundwork for national AI literacy education, including:

- **The LIFT AI Act** (S. 4414 / H.R. 5584): The Literacy in Future Technologies Artificial Intelligence Act was introduced by Sens. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Mike Rounds (R-SD), with a House companion from Reps. Tom Kean Jr. (R-NJ) and Gabe Amo (D-RI). It would authorize the National Science Foundation to award competitive, merit-reviewed grants to institutions of higher education and nonprofits. The grants would fund K-12 AI literacy curriculum development, teacher professional development, and evaluation tools. The bill drew support from both education groups and the technology industry.

Call to Action for the 120th Congress

In the 120th Congress, lawmakers should pass a National AI Literacy Initiative that meets these requirements:

- **Funds K-12 AI Literacy at Scale**
    - Pass the LIFT AI Act with significant, sustained funding for curriculum development, instructional materials, and national proficiency standards, so every student gains a basic understanding of how AI works and how to use it responsibly.
- **Trains Teachers**
    - Invest in professional development so educators have the training and tools to teach AI literacy confidently and safely.
- **Extends Literacy Beyond the Classroom**
    - Support AI literacy for adult workers, job seekers, seniors, and families through community colleges, libraries, and workforce programs, with particular attention to rural and underserved communities.
- **Measures Results and Ensures Access**
    - Fund independent evaluation of what works, and set aside resources so under-resourced schools are not left behind.