



Sept. 10, 2024

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chair
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Sept. 11 markup of significant AI legislation

Dear Chair Lucas, Ranking Member Lofgren, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:

Engine is a non-profit technology policy, research, and advocacy organization that bridges the gap between policymakers and startups. Engine works with government and a community of thousands of high-technology, growth-oriented startups across the nation to support a policy environment conducive to technology entrepreneurship. As artificial intelligence is increasingly used, developed, and deployed by startups, Engine has a strong interest in ensuring legislation advanced by the Committee accounts for the needs, experiences, and interests of the nation's technology entrepreneurs.

I. Startups are key stakeholders in AI policy.

Large AI models created by large companies dominate headlines, but startups are harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence to solve many pressing issues. The dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of artificial intelligence also offers ample opportunities for startups to explore innovative ways to utilize the technology, enabling startups to create new business models and carve out unique niches in the market. For example,¹ startups are using AI to monitor and ensure the health of bees, detect when an elderly person falls, or enable better sustainability practices. Startups are using AI to counter historic biases in health, lending, and employment. And startups are using AI to help us have fun too: teaching us to play games, finding events we're interested in, and helping us take better vacations.

Given startups' essential role in AI development and innovation, U.S. policymakers must take startups' experiences and resources into account as they consider legislation regarding AI. Legislation creating AI resources to be leveraged by startups, bolstering the AI talent pool, and

¹ Find these examples and more startups using AI across the economy by exploring Engine's #StartupsEverywhere series at <https://www.engine.is/startupseverywhere>.

supporting the development and dissemination of voluntary best practices all stand to benefit startups, and are positive steps policymakers can take—and your committee should advance them.

II. Government resources in AI are critical for promoting innovation, growing the talent pool, and bolstering U.S. startup success.

Policymakers can play a pivotal role in actively nurturing innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. startups, and several pieces of legislation contain elements that will further this goal, including **H.R. 5077, the CREATE AI Act**. AI innovation can be very resource-intensive, and the dissemination of data and compute resources to startups can help lower barriers. The National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource, which would be authorized by the CREATE AI Act, would provide these resources.

In addition to monetary and technical constraints, shortages of key talent also pose barriers to AI innovation for startups. By also disseminating compute, datasets, and educational resources to students and academic institutions, the CREATE AI Act will help to bolster the AI talent pool in the U.S. Likewise, **H.R. 9211, the LIFT AI Act; H.R. 9402, the NSF AI Education Act of 2024; and H.R. 9403, the Expanding AI Voices Act** are aimed at broadly growing our AI talent pool, through resources and literacy efforts targeted to students in K-12 through to existing STEM workers. These resources will train the next generation of startup founders and employees, and support AI research that could be commercialized as a startup.

III. Voluntary standards and guidelines have a central role in AI development.

Startups routinely look to expert and consensus-based guidance and standards as they develop their products. Government has already developed useful resources around responsible AI development, like the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s AI risk management framework, and should further facilitate the dissemination and use of such resources. **H.R. 9197, the Small Business AI Advancement Act** would ensure NIST develops and disseminates resources directed to the needs and experiences of startups and conventional small businesses. Moreover, the bill could help reduce barriers to uptake of AI technologies by conventional small businesses and by startups, helping to grow the market for a wide range of innovative AI solutions.

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We appreciate the Committee’s work to bolster AI development, education, and research. We encourage the committee to pursue legislation that enhances U.S. innovation while avoiding unintended consequences to startups, and we are eager to be a resource as the Committee continues to work on these issues.

Sincerely,

Engine
700 Pennsylvania Ave SE
Washington D.C. 20003

cc: Honorable Members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology