

Opening Statement of Chairman Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA)
Workforce Protections Subcommittee
“Building an AI-Ready America: Understanding AI’s Economic Impact
on Workers and Employers”
April 15, 2026
(As prepared for delivery)

In the three years since the launch of ChatGPT, artificial intelligence (AI) has already begun reshaping the economy and redefining work. Across every major industry, AI-powered tools are reshaping productivity, decision-making, and competitiveness in the global economy. At every level, and in almost every field, AI is changing the way we work and even the way we view work.

Because AI allows employers to deploy resources more efficiently, small businesses are at the center of this technological transformation. They are the fastest adopters of AI and other emerging technologies, using these tools to enhance efficiency and compete with larger businesses. In some cases, this can happen in ways many might not expect. According to the Small Business Administration, employers with fewer than 20 workers expect AI to increase their hiring needs, not reduce them.

While AI holds significant promise for increasing economic productivity, Congress needs better insight into how AI is affecting employees and employers before offering legislative solutions. Better data will lead to better policy—supporting responsible AI development and adoption while protecting the public.

At the same time, some states and localities are moving ahead independently with their own AI regulations. New York, California, Colorado, and others have begun implementing policies intended to address privacy, discrimination, and other workforce concerns. However, some have raised concerns that these policies risk creating a patchwork of inconsistent rules that create compliance challenges and raise costs. For businesses that operate across state lines, navigating conflicting regulations can create challenges. This is especially true for small businesses.

We also have to consider the large investments by foreign countries in AI research, infrastructure, and workforce development. As we enter a new era of global competition, we should consider the implications for domestic AI industries if patchwork state and local regulations were to impede the development of our capabilities.

The bottom line is this: American leadership in artificial intelligence will be essential in the years to come. To support domestic innovation, Congress should consider ways to better enable businesses to innovate and modernize. This means supporting policies that encourage responsible AI development, improve access to high-quality data, and create opportunities for efficiency in our regulatory framework.

At the same time, Congress has a responsibility to take seriously the risks AI may pose to the public interest. We must consider how to adopt safeguards that are grounded in evidence and designed with industry, consumers, and workers in mind.

We may not be able to predict exactly how, but AI will continue to transform the economy. With policies that strike the right balance between innovation and accountability, the United States can build a strong and positive future for American workers and employers.

