

INSIGHTS

Two Senate
Committees Examine
the Use of Artificial
Intelligence (AI)

Two Senate Committees Examine the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

On November 11, 2023, two Senate committee hearings on Artificial Intelligence (AI) were held: one on general AI policy and one on AI in Health Care.

AI AND HEALTHCARE

On November 9, 2023, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security held a hearing on [Avoiding a Cautionary Tale: Policy Considerations for Artificial Intelligence in Health Care](#). This hearing was focused on AI's positive and negative impact on the healthcare system.

Most questions during the hearing focused on a few main topics reviewed below. Apart from those, the other questions were to confirm that the three bills Members plan on introducing adequately address the issues. Those three bills are the [Artificial Intelligence & Biosecurity Risk Assessment Act](#), the [Securing Gene Synthesis Act](#), and a new bill from Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN), the [Medicare Transaction Fraud Prevention Act](#). This Act would prevent the elderly population from being victims of fraud.

Witnesses

- [Dr. Thomas Inglesby](#), Director Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security
- [Dr. Kenneth D. Mandl](#), Harvard Professor and Director, Computational Health Informatics Program, Boston Children's Hospital
- [Ms. Christine Huberty](#), Supervising Attorney, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
- [Dr. Keith Sale](#), Vice President and Chief Physician Executive of Ambulatory Services, University of Kansas Health System

Witnesses agreed the Executive Order signed last week was a great start but more needs to be done. Other than discussing their respective bills, Senators asked questions on several topics but kept coming back to key themes: accountability, burnout, and security. Senators are concerned about who would be held accountable when an AI mistake is made, and they discussed how making it a requirement for the AI models to have the ability to let physicians and healthcare workers "pull back the lid" to find out why the model made the decision it did. Witnesses believe AI is making great strides to decrease clinician burnout by greatly reducing the burden on Physicians to document everything in interactions with patients. And lastly, because AI models contain sensitive health information, they discussed how security needs to be

a priority so that the large amount of data it would be conglomerating is not compromised.

PHILOSOPHY OF AI

On November 9, 2023, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security met to discuss the [Philosophy of AI: Learning From History, Shaping Our Future](#).

Witnesses

- [Prof. Daron Acemođlu](#), MIT Economics
- [Prof. Margaret Hu](#), Research Affiliate with the Institute for Computational Data Sciences at Penn State University
- [Prof. Shannon Vallor](#), School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences at the Edinburgh Futures Institute

Questions and comments from the Senators indicated this hearing was to explore what action(s) should be taken rather than introducing solutions.

Prof. Acemođlu believes that there is a “pro-human, pro-worker, pro-citizen” direction for AI that would be great for democracy and shared technology. When Senators asked him to expand on the topic, he explained that the way America is moving towards automating human work rather than supporting it is not how AI development should continue. For example, a “low skill” electrician can use AI for training and troubleshooting on the spot, but the AI should not replace the human doing the work. The Professor admits that even though he doesn’t believe AI will/does automate white-collar jobs, it will most likely automate the IT and IT security jobs.

Prof. Margaret Hu and Prof. Shannon Vallor had similar concerns about the relationship between AI and governance. They said the law must govern AI, not the other way around. For example, AI is being used in facial recognition software for police work, but it is biased towards certain groups of people. The Senators echoed the witnesses’ concerns. Sen. Josh Hawley discussed the example of an Amazon AI recruiting tool that showed bias against hiring women.

The subjects that concerned the Committee the most were AI fostering extremism/misinformation and Chinese surveillance & censorship technology. Regarding misinformation, Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) specifically asked if the witnesses had any recommendations for Congress. Prof. Acemođlu said that there isn’t much you can do to stop the act of spreading misinformation itself, but you can lessen the incentives to decrease the promotion of it. His two main suggestions were to create taxes on digital advertisements and to lay the framework for data markets rather than data being held by just a few large entities. Sen. Hassan & Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) also asked about Chinese AI surveillance &

ensorship technology and, how they are spreading throughout the world, and what we can do to change that. Prof. Acemoglu said the U.S. should lead, pointing out that when the US started to invest more in renewable sources, the rest of the world did too. He says that if the U.S. passes laws that foster safe AI growth (while encouraging innovation), he expects the same to happen with this industry.

We trust you found this summary useful. Please reach out to [us](#) with any questions.

©2024 Chamber Hill Strategies. All rights reserved. Any use of these materials including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Chamber Hill Strategies is strictly prohibited.