

NEWSLETTER

# Morning Tech

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## House Science subcommittees dive into AI, science innovation

BY: **MALLORY CULHANE** | 02/06/2024 05:45 AM EST*With help from John Hendel, Alfred Ng and Mohar Chatterjee*

### DRIVING THE DAY

— **Today in the House:** Lawmakers on the House Science Research and Technology and Energy subcommittees will dive into how federal agencies — and Congress — can support AI research and innovation to promote scientific discoveries.

**It's Tuesday, Feb. 6. Welcome to Morning Tech!** My roommate and I are watching *The Bachelor* (we both haven't watched a season consistently since college) and I must say, there's something about watching that show live and reading the commentary on Twitter in real time that will literally never get old.

Thoughts? Tips? Coffee recs? Send 'em my way at [mculhane@politico.com](mailto:mculhane@politico.com) or via DM at [@mallorykculhane](https://twitter.com/mallorykculhane). Got an event for our calendar? Send details to [techcalendar@politico.com](mailto:techcalendar@politico.com). Anything else? Team info below. And don't forget to add [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro) on X.

### TODAY'S AGENDA

Sen. **Amy Klobuchar** (D-Minn.) delivers remarks on the [Protect Elections from Deceptive AI Act](#) at an event on technology and election security. 8:30 a.m.

Reps. **Marc Molinaro** (R-N.Y.) and **Don Beyer** (D-Va.) and White House deputy national security adviser for cyber and emerging tech **Anne Neuberger** participate in a [Washington Post Live event on AI regulations](#). 9 a.m.

The **House Science, Space and Technology Research and Technology Subcommittee** [holds a hearing](#) on “Federal Science Agencies and the Promise of AI in Driving Scientific Discoveries.” 10 a.m.

The **House Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government** [holds a hearing](#) examining threats AI poses to the First Amendment. 10 a.m.

#### TECH OF THE TOWN

**USING AI TO DRIVE SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION** — Two House Science subcommittees are [holding a joint hearing today](#) with stakeholders from academia, government and industry to examine how the federal government can ramp up research on artificial intelligence and drive scientific innovation.

The hearing comes as lawmakers [hash out the details](#) of the 12 appropriation bills needed to fund the government for the rest of fiscal year 2024, so today’s hearing could inform those ongoing discussions. Expect to hear calls to boost funding at agencies like the National Science Foundation to bolster programs promoting AI innovation.

— **Need that cash:** Federal agencies, including NSF and the Department of Energy, are integral in the administration’s efforts to compete globally on AI. Organizations [like the Federation of American Scientists](#) have pushed lawmakers to boost funding for science and tech given that [2023 funding levels fell short](#) for some CHIPS and Science Act programs.

House Science Research and Technology Subcommittee Chair [Mike Collins](#) (R-Ga.), while acknowledging that the U.S. is in a competition with China and foreign adversaries to develop advanced technologies, will note that advancing innovation and research is “limited by the high cost of compute infrastructure. ... These costs have widened the gap between Big Tech, academic AI researchers and entrepreneurs.” Per a copy of his prepared remarks, Collins will add that it’s “Congress’ responsibility to ensure that America maintains its leadership role in AI.”

Less than two weeks ago, NSF [announced the launch of a two-year pilot program](#) for the National AI Research Resource at the direction of President Joe Biden’s executive order on AI, which will provide academics and researchers access to advanced computing, datasets and powerful AI models.

But Congress will need to provide the funding that NAIRR needs to stay up and running.

Several members of the House Science Committee — including House Science Energy Subcommittee Chair [Brandon Williams](#) (R-N.Y.) and ranking member [Jamaal Bowman](#)

(D-N.Y.) — have backed the [CREATE AI Act](#) to fund the program. (It specifically redirects funds already authorized for AI-related activities in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, rather than authorizing new funds.)

That last part could be key to garnering more Republican support for the bill given their reluctance to increase government spending in general, and NAIRR's hefty price tag. A White House task force [released a report](#) just over a year ago that found NAIRR will need \$2.6 billion over six years.

— **Widen the pool:** In addition to calls for adequate funding, Louay Chamra, dean of Oakland University's School of Engineering and Computer Science, will call on lawmakers and federal agencies to expand institutions' eligibility to participate in government research initiatives.

Programs like NAIRR “represent critical steps toward democratizing access to AI research resources, including computational power and large datasets,” Chamra will say, per a copy of his prepared remarks shared with MT. “It is imperative that these resources are made accessible to a broad spectrum of researchers to foster innovation and diversity in AI-driven scientific research.”

Oakland University's classification as an R-2 institution makes it ineligible for some research initiatives, like the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research at NSF. Chamra will argue that all institutions play critical roles in research and STEM workforce development, and will call on Congress and NSF “to ensure that the research into how to use AI, as well as how to manage it, be disseminated across all of these institutions.”

#### AT THE WHITE HOUSE

**WHITE HOUSE PRODS CONGRESS ON BROADBAND FUNDING** — The White House convened reporters Monday for a press call to tout that the Affordable Connectivity Program has enrolled more than 23 million low-income households, even as funding is set to [end this spring](#). The administration's spotlight is a bid to create public pressure to save the program at a critical time.

“We need to continue it,” Tom Perez, a senior adviser to President Joe Biden, told reporters. Perez noted nearly half of the enrollees are military families. Four million are seniors, and roughly a million are low-income college students.

— **Eyes on Congress:** Lawmakers are debating whether and how to continue the subsidies, although time is running out. There's [bipartisan, bicameral legislation](#) to slate \$7 billion for the program now, while some appropriators have considered [tapping spectrum auction revenue](#) to find at least some of the necessary money.

The ACP will stop accepting new enrollments on Thursday, [per the FCC](#).

— **Thread to watch:** Although lawmakers are fixated on finding stopgap appropriations to keep the program going until the end of the year, there's also brewing discussion over what longer-term funding mechanisms should be considered, such as rolling the program into the FCC's [Universal Service Fund](#).

FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel [last month wrote](#) Sen. [Ben Ray Lujan](#) (D-N.M.), offering analysis about the implications of rolling the ACP into the fund and different ways to expand the USF's revenue sources, such as expanding the contributors to include broadband providers, tech companies or revenue streams such as digital advertising. That could inform lawmakers' next steps on the broader subsidy challenge.

#### ON THE HILL

**HICKENLOOPER'S AI THOUGHTS** — Sen. [John Hickenlooper](#) (D-Colo.) endorsed a national data privacy law, workforce training, AI auditing standards and more in [a framework](#) he revealed at a Silicon Flatirons conference on Monday. Hickenlooper is chair of the Senate subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, which oversees legislation about AI's impact on the labor force — a hot-button issue for multiple Congress lawmakers. His public positions on AI issues come as Senate Majority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) tries to build bipartisan consensus on the Senate's AI legislation priorities.

#### IN THE COURTS

**LOCATION DATA SALES ON TRIAL** — Data broker Kochava must face federal claims that it allegedly violated people's privacy rights when it sold their location data, a U.S. district judge ruled in an order [unsealed on Monday](#).

Judge B. Lynn Winmill of the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho on Saturday denied Kochava's motion to dismiss the case, noting that the Federal Trade Commission has made a plausible claim that Kochava violated the FTC Act by selling location data.

Winmill [dismissed the initial complaint last May](#), noting the FTC's original argument didn't adequately show that Kochava's location data sales could harm people. The FTC filed its [amended complaint last June](#), which was unsealed in November.

“We are pleased with the court's ruling, which will lend further momentum to our efforts to combat unlawful sharing of consumers' sensitive location data and other revealing information,” Samuel Levine, the FTC's director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a statement.

Kochava's CEO Charles Manning said the FTC is attempting to make its own data privacy regulations without Congress' approval and that the company will continue fighting in court.

"Never in a million years did we imagine that as a small, law-abiding company we'd find ourselves in the ring on behalf of an entire industry. We're here, we have the truth in our corner, and we're in it to win it. We look forward to proving our case," Manning said in a statement.

#### ON K STREET

**BSA CALLS FOR AI ACTION** — BSA | The Software Alliance [put out its 2024 policy agenda](#) on Monday and is calling on Congress to pass legislation "that protects consumers, including through requiring impact assessments for high-risk uses of AI." BSA's Senior Vice President for U.S. Government Relations Craig Albright said in a statement that lawmakers spent 2023 learning about the potential harms and risks of AI and that 2024 is the time for Congress to act. BSA is also calling for passage of a federal data privacy law, reforming the H-1B visa process to allow tech companies to hire and retain high-skilled foreign talent, among other things.

#### QUICK DOWNLOADS

**Florida update:** A Florida Senate committee approved key changes Monday to legislation that would impose the strictest social media prohibitions for minors in the country, [POLITICO's Andrew Atterbury reports](#).

**Across the pond:** The British government will today set out its vision for regulating artificial intelligence, almost a year after it promised a light-touch "pro innovation" approach in [its AI white paper](#).

**Coming this fall:** Leonie Brinkema, a judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, has [set the trial](#) for the Department of Justice's antitrust case against Google's ad tech business to begin on Sept. 9.

**More AI-journalism partnerships:** [Microsoft announced it's teaming up](#) with journalism organizations, academic institutions and online news outlet Semafor to adopt generative AI.

**Up North:** Yoshua Bengio, scientific director at the Quebec AI Institute Mila, warned Canadian lawmakers on Monday that their plan to regulate AI is already at risk of falling behind advances in the technology, [POLITICO's Kyle Duggan reports](#).

**Mark your cal:** NTIA Administrator Alan Davidson announced the next meeting of the White House Kids Online Health and Safety Task Force will take place on March 13 at

Stanford University. No further details on participants were shared when Davidson made the announcement at the Silicon Flatirons conference.

#### TRANSITIONS

**Amy Mushahwar** has joined Lowenstein Sandler as partner and chair of its data, privacy and cybersecurity practice. ... **Meghan Pensyl** is rejoining BSA as director of policy, with a focus on AI and state AI policy. She returns to BSA from Twilio and had been at BSA immediately before that.

#### ALSO HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — The Government Executive Media Group and Federal Computer Week [hold a Zero Trust Workshop](#).

Noon — The Center for Strategic and International Studies [holds a virtual discussion](#) on “Shaping the Future of Federal Cybersecurity: Insights from the Federal Civilian Executive Branch.”

2 p.m. — The Government Executive Media Group [holds a virtual discussion](#) on “2024 Outlook: Artificial Intelligence for Technical Excellence in Government.”

2 p.m. — The Federal Communications Bar Association State and Local Practice Committee [hold a webinar](#) on “Billions for Broadband: An Update on the BEAD Grant Process and What’s Next for 2024.”

#### Have a great day!

*Tips, comments, suggestions? Send them along via email to our team: Steve Heuser ([sheuser@politico.com](mailto:sheuser@politico.com)), Nate Robson ([nrobson@politico.com](mailto:nrobson@politico.com)), Daniella Cheslow ([dcheslow@politico.com](mailto:dcheslow@politico.com)), Mallory Culhane ([mculhane@politico.com](mailto:mculhane@politico.com)), Brendan Bordelon ([bbordelon@politico.com](mailto:bbordelon@politico.com)), John Hendel ([jhendel@politico.com](mailto:jhendel@politico.com)), Rebecca Kern ([rkern@politico.com](mailto:rkern@politico.com)), Alfred Ng ([alfredng@politico.com](mailto:alfredng@politico.com)), Josh Sisco ([jsisco@politico.com](mailto:jsisco@politico.com)), Derek Robertson ([drobotson@politico.com](mailto:drobotson@politico.com)), Mohar Chatterjee ([mchatterjee@politico.com](mailto:mchatterjee@politico.com)) and Christine Mui ([cmui@politico.com](mailto:cmui@politico.com)). Got an event for our calendar? Send details to [techcalendar@politico.com](mailto:techcalendar@politico.com). And don't forget to add [@PoliticoPro](#) on X.*

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