

# AI, DIGITAL ID & DIGITAL CURRENCY

*What legislation would you support related to AI? Please address digital ID and digital currency in your response.*

## **Beth Ellen Adubato**

The Brennan Center for Justice is tracking artificial intelligence legislation. Interestingly, during the 118th Congress, lawmakers introduced over 150 bills over the use of AI—none of them passed. Some of the bills introduced by the 119th Congress that I would support are:

- AI Sovereignty Act—sponsored by Eugene Vindman (D-VA-7) which would direct the Secretary of Commerce to track crucial developments in AI technology
- Protect Elections from Deception Act—sponsored by Julie Johnson (D-TX-32)—self-explanatory
- Unleashing Low-Cost Rural AI Act—sponsored by Jim Costa (D-CA-21)—studies the impact of AI and data center site growth on energy supply resources in the US
- The Weather Act-Reauthorization Act—sponsored by Frank (R-OK-3)—improving NOAA’s weather research

These are some examples of legislation I would support—using AI to further knowledge in a more expeditious way.

I am not excited about AI in schools. It is allowing our students to take the “easy way out” on assignments (those who choose to do so, not all) and producing repetitive, often inaccurate, and ultimately soulless work.

I attended a workshop on AI through Rutgers University and was expecting it to be “pro” AI; rather, it was surprisingly negative. It was then that I first learned that AI “hallucinates,” meaning it will make-up something it does not “know.” Also, it uses an incredible amount of water and is, therefore, environmentally damaging.

I believe that AI should be used judiciously in ways that improve society and not make us less capable of critical thinking.

If you watch the documentary *The Great Hack*, you will learn about the dangers of these people sitting around in rooms, gathering all the information they can possibly find to sell you things, to brainwash voters, to learn about your personal habits. They take credit for Brexit. They literally used social media to turn Hillary Clinton into a monster. They attacked her on the right and the left. After Trump won that election, the employees at Cambridge Analytica had a great celebration. It is unsettling.

Digital IDs carry significant risks to privacy and susceptibility to mass surveillance. We probably have no idea about the damage that was done by “DOGE” and will be done by Palantir. I believe our government should be protecting us from such invasions, not using them to create a police state.

Because of this, I do not support a complete system of digital ID. Unfortunately, I think we are way beyond this. Data is kept on you every time you log-on to your computer, every time you use Duolingo or use your EZPass. Journalist Ronan Farrow often appears on podcasts and says that we have to turn off our phones at least once-a-day. How many of us realize that everything is monitored?

While digital currency offers faster and less expensive transactions with greater mobility of payment, it also carries greater risks of hacking, high volatility, and regulatory uncertainty. For those negative reasons, I would not sanction its use until we—as a country—are out from under this corrupt regime.

## **Brian Varela**

AI is less regulated than sandwiches in the United States, the FDA has detailed rules about what goes into your lunch, but no federal standard prevents algorithms from discriminating against you when you apply for a job or a mortgage, or require a healthcare procedure. I support the AI Civil Rights Act, which would prohibit algorithmic discrimination in employment, housing, lending, and healthcare, require independent audits before deployment, and give individuals the right to appeal AI decisions to a human being. I also support the No Robot Bosses Act, a bipartisan bill that would prohibit employers from relying exclusively on automated systems for hiring or firing decisions. And I oppose the Trump administration's executive order threatening to sue states that protect their residents from algorithmic discrimination.

Digital ID systems pose serious surveillance risks that demand strong guardrails. Recent reports and court decisions have raised alarms about attempts to link sensitive federal databases, and judges have underscored that the Privacy Act still has real force. Any digital ID framework must include strict data minimization, prohibit tracking users across transactions, and preserve physical ID alternatives. I would oppose any system that could be exploited to restrict healthcare access or track Americans' movements.

Digital currency policy must balance innovation with consumer protection and civil liberties. I support strong anti-money laundering requirements for cryptocurrency, but I'm equally concerned about a poorly designed central bank digital currency enabling government surveillance of lawful transactions. The Federal Reserve should continue its research, over 130 countries are exploring CBDCs, and ceding this field to China would be a strategic mistake, but any digital dollar must have privacy protections built in from the start.

## **Megan O'Rourke**

I support AI innovation coupled with a policy framework to leverage productivity gains to reduce average working hours and provide a safety net for displaced workers. AI data centers must also provide clean energy to the grid to offset new energy demands. As data becomes increasingly digitized, we must protect personal privacy, which includes protecting voluntary digital IDs and preserving the use of cash.

## Michael Roth

AI and all technology advancement should be judged by a single standard: does it help working people build a more secure, affordable future? AI has us on the precipice of a massive economic transformation and Congress has a responsibility to make sure it works for people, not just for powerful companies and the billionaires who control them. Handled correctly, AI could enable breakthroughs in medical research and treatment, raise productivity and economic growth, reduce some consumer costs, create good-paying jobs, and help the US outcompete other leading economies. But absent significant intervention, it could concentrate power, displace millions of workers, undermine trust, create further isolation and disillusionment, and put people, our democracy, and national security at risk. We need clear rules of the road, strong worker protections, and public investments so the benefits of AI are broadly shared. In Congress, I would support legislation that puts people first by focusing on good jobs, consumer protection, and American competitiveness:

- Empower workers to have more say in how AI is used by employers through unions and sectoral bargaining over AI use so workers across an industry, not just a single firm, can collaborate with employers to set standards for how AI is adopted
- Invest in workforce transition and training, including apprenticeships, community college partnerships, and on-the-job reskilling
- Support legislation like the CREATE AI Act that promotes innovation and broad access to AI tools for small businesses and startups, not just large incumbents, so AI expands opportunity across the economy
- Explore the best way to ensure broad-based distribution of wealth created through AI, including a potential new tax on large AI companies and use the revenue to provide support to workers or providing all Americans shares of AI companies so everyone shares in profits
- Set clear federal guardrails for high-risk AI applications, especially in healthcare, mental health, housing, credit, and criminal justice, where mistakes can cause serious harm to individuals
- Hold companies accountable for unsafe or deceptive AI systems, including deepfakes, fraud, and manipulation
- For Digital IDs, I would focus on making the government work better with the choice of the consumer. I support an optional, privacy-preserving digital ID standard that makes it easier for people to access benefits, prove eligibility, and interact with the government more efficiently, especially during emergencies. The digital ID standard would need strong safeguards on data use and choice.
- For digital currency, I will work to protect consumers and support innovation. I would back legislation that creates clear frameworks for regulation such as the CLARITY Act, bring digital currencies under clear federal oversight so consumers are protected from fraud, abuse, and manipulation, and support a stable regulatory framework that treats digital assets with the same seriousness as other financial products, while allowing responsible innovation to continue

## Rebecca Bennett

We saw with social media what happens when tech companies operate without meaningful regulation and cannot let it happen again when it comes to AI. Similarly we've seen with FTX what happens when crypto

operates in a fully unregulated space. I support common sense regulation that allows America to maintain it's edge over China on AI without allowing the harms we've seen with unchecked technology companies financially incentivized to do the wrong thing. We also need common sense consumer protections when it comes to crypto.

## **Tina Shah**

Artificial intelligence is here. I believe that it is a tool, and depending on how it is used could generate benefit or harm. We should be doing everything within our power to make sure we are restricting any negative impact on our quality of life, safety, environment, and cost of living. The role of government is to set the right guardrails. In Congress, I will work to protect people on this new frontier, and make sure that the data centers popping up over New Jersey are paying for their own electricity, rather than driving up utility costs for local residents.

As the former Chief Medical Officer of a healthcare AI company, I have firsthand knowledge of both the opportunities that AI presents, as well as the potential threats from national security to patient safety. In order to effectively legislate on AI, we need Members of Congress who have direct experience and real understanding of the possibilities and risks of AI. As someone with private sector AI experience, I will be well positioned to shape policy that uses AI for innovation and progress, without sacrificing jobs or hurting humans.