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Protecting the Family in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: 5 Recommendations for the White House's AI Action Plan

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Introduction

This document is a response to the Office of Science and Technology Policy's request for information regarding its development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Plan.¹

In times of revolutionary technological change such as our own, it is challenging to preserve and extol what is distinctly human. This is especially the case when the technological change is state-sponsored, as AI is becoming under the Trump Administration. In his recent executive order, President Trump stated that his administration seeks "to sustain and enhance America's global AI dominance in order to promote human flourishing, economic competitiveness, and national security."² We praise the Trump Administration for foregrounding human flourishing as a primary policy objective in its quest for AI superiority and for seeking to direct federal efforts to promote its advancement.

Though promoting human flourishing is first on the list of priorities for how to sustain and enhance America's global AI dominance, much of the deepest thinking around AI has focused on the administration's latter two policy goals, i.e., economic competitiveness and national security. While these three goals are fundamentally interrelated, human flourishing cannot be simply reduced to economic and military dominance.

Our comment seeks to offer guidance regarding the administration's first AI policy goal: the promotion of human flourishing. As we and others have outlined in "[A Future for the Family: A New Technology Agenda for the Right](#)," a statement that has garnered the support of dozens of eminent conservative leaders alongside prominent technologists, human flourishing depends on a culture of thriving families.³ The family begets human children, and it is unmatched in its natural ability to raise them to be healthy and productive. In other words, there can be no policy to promote human flourishing that does not have the objective of empowering and advancing the well-being of families. Conversely, any technological program that undermines the family is opposed to human flourishing. We echo Vice President Vance's hope that AI can "make people more productive, more prosperous, and more free," as he put it in his February 11, 2025, speech at the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris, France. But as the president's executive order underscores, ensuring that human flourishing is advanced in the era of AI will require the government to make deliberate policy choices.

Human flourishing must be a concrete policy goal in an era of technological change, especially when the government itself is working to drive the technical revolution. This is one of the fundamental lessons of the digital age. As the first Trump Administration acknowledged in its National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan: 2019 Update, investments by the U.S. Federal Government have produced “revolutionary technological advances [that] we depend on today, including the Internet, GPS, smartphone speech recognition,” and more.⁴ But while the smartphone has offered Americans innumerable conveniences, it has also wreaked havoc on the American family. Screen and social media addiction,⁵ an adolescent mental health crisis,⁶ hardcore pornography made readily available to children,⁷ and declining literacy rates⁸—these are just a few of the smartphone’s devastating effects on the family. Today, a massive social movement of parents and lawmakers has been awakened to rescue children from the harms of screens. It is morally unconscionable that parents across the country have been forced to protect their children from technologies generated by their own government. While technological innovation often has unforeseen consequences, we strongly believe that a number of these devastating effects could have been mitigated had the federal government taken more responsibility to ensure that the most beneficial commercial uses of smartphones were not saddled with predatory add-ons.

The Trump Administration need not repeat these same mistakes with AI. Today, AI poses significant challenges to the family—and, by necessity, human flourishing. AI companies are developing 21st century ed tech (which may or may not benefit the family), commercializing AI sexual companions, making social media algorithms manipulative and addictive with AI, and advancing new techniques for gene editing and embryo selection. Likewise, some predict that AI and robotics have the potential to replace millions of American jobs. If such developments are permitted without any mitigation, they could have devastating effects on marriage rates and family well-being, as research has shown that access to good jobs increases the marriageability of men in particular.⁹ These are just a few examples in which AI, for better or worse, will have intrinsic effects on the family. It is our belief that, like the smartphone, the best of what AI can offer the American family will be crippled by allowing these irresponsible outcomes to advance. With AI the Trump Administration should apply the lessons of recent history and choose to guard against family-unfriendly outcomes that undermine human flourishing. By developing a policy framework up front that prioritizes the family in its development and governance of AI, the Trump Administration can protect and strengthen the American family with AI and keep it from potentially exploitative uses.

We do not believe that AI is fated to diminish marriage and family life. But without the leadership of this administration to ensure that AI is a tool to strengthen the family, it almost certainly will be left free to do extraordinary damage. The administration’s AI Action Plan should therefore develop an approach to governing AI to prioritize, protect, and augment the well-being of the family.

To help realize this positive vision for guiding AI toward human flourishing by way of the family, we recommend the following five policy actions: 1) establish the President’s Council on Technology and the Family; 2) require family impact and opportunity assessments; 3) incorporate a family-focused strategy and personnel in AI research and development; 4) balance automation with investments in job recovery and skill development; and 5) protect minors from AI-related harms.

1. Establish the President’s Council on Technology and Family

The President should establish a President’s Council on Technology and the Family to advise the executive branch, including research and development efforts, on how to harness technological innovation—including, but not limited to AI innovation—to strengthen families and encourage family formation, how technology-related job losses within certain industries could affect marriage rates, and how to protect families and children against harmful uses of technology.

The President’s Council on Technology and the Family would be designed specifically to advise the executive branch on how to promote human flourishing through technology and to monitor technological threats to family well-being emanating from AI and other advanced technologies.

2. Require Family Impact & Opportunity Assessments

Federal agencies involved in the research and development (R&D) and/or regulation of AI should conduct regular assessments regarding the impact of AI technologies on American families. A good starting point for such assessments would be the statutory language provided by Section 654 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act of 1999.¹⁰ Using this or similar language, agencies should evaluate how or whether a particular AI research project subsidized by the government’s R&D expenditures:

- strengthens or erodes the stability or safety of the family, including marriage;
- strengthens or erodes the authority and rights of parents in education, nurture, and supervision of their children;
- helps the family perform its functions or outsources those functions;
- increases or decreases disposable income or poverty of families and children;
- has benefits that justify its financial impact on the family; and/or
- establishes implicit or explicit policy concerning the relationship between the behavior and personal responsibility of youth and the norms of rationality.

These assessments should be annually submitted to the subgroups overseeing AI R&D, as well as the President's Council on Technology and the Family.

3. Incorporate Family-Focused Strategy and Personnel in AI Research and Development

Strategy. To ensure that the federal government's development of AI promotes human flourishing, the administration should expand its strategy to evaluate the impact of AI on the family and develop standards and benchmarks to ensure that AI serves the flourishing of the family. In the prior Trump Administration's June 2019 *National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development and Strategic Plan*, the Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence of the National Science and Technology Council outlined a number of strategies for AI R&D. Among these were strategies to "understand and address the ethical, legal, and societal implications of AI" as well as "measure and evaluate AI technologies through standards and benchmarks."¹¹ The federal government should incorporate human flourishing, with an emphasis on family well-being, in its strategies and benchmarks. By doing so, this ongoing focus would clearly differentiate the Trump Administration from the previous administration, which did not include such critical assessments in its strategic plan.

Personnel. To direct AI R&D for the purposes of human flourishing, the administration should include in its relevant committees, subcommittees, or working groups personnel who can expertly advise the AI R&D efforts of federal agencies on how not to negatively harm the family. The prior Trump Administration established three committees or subgroups to direct, implement, and coordinate AI R&D efforts: The Select Committee on AI, The NSTC Subcommittee on Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, and the AI R&D Interagency Working Group. Should similar committees and subcommittees be established during the second Trump Administration, we urge the administration to select members who can speak to the ways that technology can empower or hinder families.

4. Balance Automation with Investments in Job Recovery and Skill Development

The implementation of AI and automation into American industry offers great promise for the reshoring of manufacturing, increasing worker productivity, and growing the economy overall. Yet, while extraordinary economic opportunities will be made possible by AI and robotics, such technologies will not benefit all; many, indeed, will be negatively affected, especially families.

Access to good work has a direct bearing on marriage rates in America, and so this fundamentally implicates family well-being.¹² Take trucking as a prime example of the potential for crisis. The industry employs millions of working-class men around the country, and as Martolf and Wilcox show, it fosters relatively high marriage rates for working-class men, especially compared with post-industrial alternatives in the health-care, retail, and food-services industries.¹³ As Jon Askonas and Michael Toscano recently wrote in National Affairs, “Firing a host of American truckers in the span of a few years would destroy millions of families—a massive negative externality.”¹⁴

Similar concerns have been voiced by this administration. In Vice President Vance’s speech at the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris, France, he said “We will always center American workers in our AI policy.” He added,

We refuse to view AI as a purely disruptive technology that will inevitably automate away our labor force. We believe and we will fight for policies that ensure that AI is going to make our workers more productive.

We applaud the Trump Administration’s recognition that if the federal government is going to subsidize AI’s expansion, then it is also responsible for the effects on the American worker, and, in turn, the American family.

In this spirit, we recommend the following actions to help American workers adjust to AI and automation within their industries.

- The President’s Council on Technology and the Family should submit an annual report to the president on how AI and automation could affect industries that offer “good jobs” to workers, which foster high marriage rates among American workers, e.g., trucking and manufacturing.
- The Trump Administration (TAA) should urge Congress to renew and expand the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (which expired July 1, 2022). The renewed TAA should establish a Technology Adjustment Assistance program at the Department of Labor (DOL) to provide aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of technology-related job losses and disruptions.
- The Trump Administration should direct the DOL’s Employment and Training Administration to assess how it can provide companies with grants for employee retraining in industries heavily affected by technology-related job losses, to upskill their workers and keep them employed.
- The administration should direct the Department of Commerce to assess how it can award regional development grants to areas hardest hit by technology-related job losses.
- The administration should have the Secretary of Labor issue guidance clarifying that individuals whose primary occupations are at high risk of automation or AI displacement qualify for Dislocated Worker services under Title I of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- The administration should further direct Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to incorporate data on AI-related displacement risks into their local plans as required by 20 CFR § 679.560.

- The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) should work to initiate notice-and-comment to update WIOA performance accountability provisions under 20 CFR Part 677 toward developing standardized metrics for tracking reemployment outcomes in AI-impacted industries (see: 29 U.S.C. 3141).
- Local WDBs should be instructed to prioritize short-term AI upskilling programs, including micro-credentials and AI literacy training, as allowable under 29 U.S.C. 3174 (Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities) as well as state-level "rapid response" programs.
- The Secretary of Labor should use its discretionary authority over demonstration grants and pilot programs (29 U.S.C. 3224) to pilot an AI Reskilling Demonstration Grant program for jumpstarting AI-assisted forms of accelerated education and retraining in collaboration with WDBs, community colleges, and private technology companies.
- The administration should direct the DOL to reprioritize existing grants and education and training programs to favor AI-robust occupations, trades apprenticeships, etc.
- The Trump Administration should encourage blanket WIOA waiver requests under 29 U.S.C. 3249(i), provided they present an AI-focused reform strategy.

We encourage the Trump Administration to treat these policy actions as mere starting points for deeper policy engagement on how to ensure that AI and automation benefits the American worker and strengthens the American family.

5. Protect Minors from AI-Related Harms

AI poses unique harms to minors who, due to their ongoing development, lack the maturity to use advanced technologies with discernment and responsibility. This is true not only in matters of education, where AI shortcuts the learning process and entices students to plagiarize. It is also true socially and relationally. Today, partial or complete images of minors have been used to create AI-generated deep-fake child sexual abuse material (CSAM).¹⁵ Some companies are even marketing apps that can AI-generate videos of one kissing his or her "crush."¹⁶ Innocent-minded minors may think nothing of this, but bullies and bad actors have leveraged such AI to criminally harm others by generating CSAM. Likewise, in an era such as ours, where human interaction is mediated principally through screens, AI intelligence and chatbots can easily appear indistinguishable from human beings, especially to minors. Consider the case of 14-year-old Sewell Setzer who was encouraged by a Character.AI chatbot to take his own life.¹⁷ Children who grow up in homes without their married biological parents are especially at risk. As research from the Institute for Family Studies has shown, young adults from non-intact families are much more likely to be open to AI friendships and romantic partners.¹⁸

More generally, research by the IFS finds that 25% of American young adults (ages 18-39) believe that AI has the potential to replace real-world relationships. This despairing view of what AI could portend could have a devastating effect on marriage rates (and therefore, fertility), as desires to marry and have kids are directly connected to hope for the future. For that reason, the Trump administration should fundamentally oppose the commercialization of romantic relationships with AI and robots.¹⁹

The administration should work with Congress and direct relevant federal agencies to monitor AI-based plagiarism and AI-related criminal activity as well as to take steps to ensure that minors are protected from AI-generated CSAM, AI chatbots marketed as “friends” or “romantic partners,” and other AI-related harms. In general, AI sexual or romantic companions are predatory and should not be permitted to come to market in the United States. Within AI regulation and R&D, potential AI-related harms to minors should be a critical part of any Family Impact and Opportunity Assessment (see above) and should be annually reported to the subgroups overseeing AI R&D, as well as the President’s Council on Technology and the Family.

Conclusion

We commend these policy actions to the Trump Administration as essential to the development of a policy approach to AI that promotes human flourishing. They will enable the administration to evaluate and monitor AI’s effect on the family on an ongoing basis and recommend further policy actions that can empower families with the benefits of technology and protect them from technological threats.

Respectfully,

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