Washington, D.C. – Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) today spoke on the Senate floor on the release of the Bipartisan Roadmap For Artificial Intelligence Policy, which follows the landmark all-Senate AI Insight Forums. Below are Senator Schumer’s remarks, which can also be viewed here:

Last year, Congress faced a momentous choice: either watch from the sidelines as artificial intelligence reshaped our world, or make a novel, bipartisan effort to enhance but also regulate this technology before it was too late.

So, as Majority Leader, I convened a bipartisan working group of Senators last year – Senators Rounds, Heinrich, and Young – to chart the path forward on AI in the Senate.

Today, after months of discussion, after hundreds of meetings, and after nine first-of-their-kind AI Insight Forums, our Bipartisan Senate Working Group released the first-ever Roadmap for AI Policy in the Senate.

Our Policy Roadmap for AI is the first, most comprehensive, most bipartisan, and most forward-thinking report on AI regulation ever produced by Congress. Our Roadmap lays out a panoply of policy priorities and guardrails that our group believes merit bipartisan consideration this Congress and beyond.

Three words govern what we do: urgency, humility, bipartisanship.

Urgency, because AI is so complex, so rapidly evolving, and so broad in its impact – it covers almost every aspect of society. The longer we wait, the bigger the gap becomes. Just this week, ChatGPT released a new model that can read facial expressions and translate spoken language in real-time.

Humility – this is hard to do – because AI is nothing like Congress has ever dealt with before. It's rapidly changing. As we mentioned, every week something new happens. It's all-encompassing. And Congress has never really dealt with it before; in areas like health or defense, we have a long track record and lots of expertise, but not so in AI, because it's so new.

And finally, bipartisanship, because the changes that AI brings won’t discriminate between left, right, and center. And we all know the only way to get things done here is bipartisanship. That means compromise by Democrats and Republicans, but certainly getting nothing done is a worse alternative.

As I have always said, innovation must be our north star.

Innovation – America must take the lead in the world, continue to innovate, use the great nutrient agar of entrepreneurship and doing new things and reaching out in new directions. We've been the most innovative country in the world. We should keep that.

But innovation has two senses – two parts – and both are very important to realize. One I call transformational innovation, and one I call sustainable innovation.

Transformational innovation is reaching the stars. It's the great stuff that AI could do. What if AI cured cancer? We’ve got to make sure we don't stand in the way of that happening. What if AI dealt with climate change in a really strong, new way? Or fed the hungry of the world? Or gave each person on Earth a teacher? Senator Young mentioned this yesterday, a teacher that could just talk to them. These are great opportunities that we can't afford to miss.

But we also need sustainable innovation. That means we need innovation to produce guardrails that minimize the damage that AI could bring. How do you deal with workers that might be displaced? We don't want to repeat the mistake of globalization, where globalization did a lot of good things, took a billion people, probably, out of poverty in the world, but no one paid attention to those who are hurt by globalization. We have to pay attention to bias, because many of these big systems have bias built into them, and we can't repeat that error. We have to deal with the creative community and intellectual property. So, we need innovation in these areas as well, to make sure that the liabilities of AI are dealt with.

So, we need both transformational innovation and sustainable innovation, in a sense to maximize the benefits of AI and minimize the liabilities. It's no easy task. It's no easy task.

But our Insight Forums were designed to be balanced, with inputs of leaders from the industry – they operate these AI complexes, we needed to hear from them. But also leaders from civil rights, and labor, and the creative communities sitting right next to them. And our AI forums were amazing. There were back-and-forths. People really didn't just make speeches, but tried to come up with questions we needed to answer and solutions to those questions. It’s a difficult job, but I believe we achieved that balance in our AI forums and certainly in the Roadmap. Balance is important.

Now, to help move forward on both forms of innovation – innovation, of course, as I said, being our north star, transformational and sustainable innovation – we recommend a $32 billion surge in emergency funding to secure America's dominance in AI.

And let me underscore, this is a bipartisan recommendation. Senators Heinrich and I of course care about it, but so do Senators Young and Rounds, and they were quite eloquent yesterday about how we needed to spend this money or U.S. would fall way behind.

Now, where do we go from here? Our Policy Roadmap is intended to be used by our committee chairs and ranking members as a foundation to move on good, bipartisan AI legislation. It's the committees that do the legislating. That's what's always happened around here.

We need our committees to continue the bipartisan momentum of the AI Gang, to achieve the hope of passing legislation by the end of the year.

We don't expect every piece of AI to be addressed, every problem that’s in our roadmap to be addressed. Some will lend themselves to move more quickly than others, and we're not going to hold back on some that are ready because others are not yet ready. This is, as I said, a very difficult process that we have to approach with humility.

Let me just say this: our committee chairs and ranking members are ready and eager to engage in AI.

Our Roadmap includes many areas of bipartisan agreement that committees can use. And, already, we're making progress in the Rules Committee, which is marking up legislation today.

The Commerce Committee is looking at legislation regarding AI innovation.

The Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee is considering how to leverage AI in the federal workforce.

The Armed Services Committee is leading the way on AI and the military.

The list goes on and on. So, our committees are getting actively involved, which is what we want.

Our Policy Roadmap also embraces action to protect our elections from the potential risk of AI.

The 2024 elections will be the first elections ever held in the age of AI. If we are not careful, AI could jaundice, and even totally discredit, our entire system of elections as we know it. So, today I am joining the Rules Committee, which is marking up three bills – all three with bipartisan support – to address AI’s impact on our elections. I strongly support these bills, and I commend Senator Klobuchar and her co-sponsors for their bipartisan work.

And that's just happening today, but we would expect there will be other committees putting forth legislation in the near future.

Our Policy Roadmap also advocates for a host of regulatory recommendations that help maximize AI’s potential and minimize its risks – risks like bias, and job displacement, and privacy invasion. These are all difficult issues to deal with, but move forward we must.

So, our Policy Roadmap is an important step in AI regulation, and getting the committees here in the Congress to start figuring out the bipartisan legislation that they can move forward on is a good step.

But I also plan to meet with Speaker Johnson in the near future to see how we can make Congress’s efforts on AI not just bipartisan, but also bicameral.

So, today is immensely satisfying for our Bipartisan AI Gang. It's been a long, long time, and a culmination of months of listening and thinking and working on this issue.

So, with great sincerity and humility, I want to thank my colleagues in the Bipartisan Senate Working Group – Senators Rounds, Heinrich, and Young. I thank my Senate colleagues who attended our Insight Forums. Over 70 senators attended at least one, and many attended multiple forums. They are beginning their work on AI through the committee process. And I thank all the staff, who have put a lot effort and a lot of hours into this Policy Roadmap. I have a great staff, and they have been so instrumental in getting us to the point we're at now.

Congress can't and won’t solve every challenge AI presents today, but with this Policy Roadmap, we now have a foundation necessary to propel America into the age of AI.