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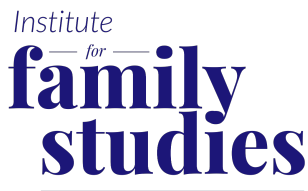
Organization: The Institute for Family Studies

General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

IFS Comment_RFI National AI RD Strategic Plan



29 May 2025

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Subject: 2025 National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Plan

This document is submitted in response to the Office of Science and Technology Policy's (OSTP) request for information (RFI) for its development of a 2025 National Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Research and Development (R&D) Plan.

Building on his last term, President Trump has made it this administration's goal for the federal government to augment A.I. innovation "to sustain and enhance America's global A.I. dominance in order to promote human flourishing, economic competitiveness, and national security."¹ As we noted in our March 14, 2025, comment,² the advancement of human flourishing, though often harmonious with the goals of advancing economic competitiveness and national security, is not reducible to the latter two, nor is it a mere a byproduct of them. Properly understood, human flourishing is a discrete policy goal that requires deliberate policy choices to accomplish.

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, the promotion of human flourishing depends, fundamentally, on a culture of thriving families.³ Therefore, any policy that seeks to advance it must first seek to empower and advance the well-being of families. This is also true of R&D policy, which should, under this paradigm of human flourishing, build family well-being into the research agenda and process, rather than (as it stands now) seek merely to protect the consumer from downstream consequences of technology developed as result of prior federal action. To that end, this comment makes the following recommendations:

¹ President Donald Trump, "Executive Order No. 14179: Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence," Jan 23, 2025, 90 FR8741.

² Institute for Family Studies, "Comment Letter on Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Action Plan (Feb 6, 2025)," <https://files.nitrd.gov/90-fr-9088/AI-RFI-2025-1417.pdf>.

³ Michael Toscano, Brad Littlejohn, Clare Morell, Jon Askonas, and Emma Waters, "A Future for the Family, A New Technology Agenda for the Right," *First Things*, Jan 29, 2025, <https://firstthings.com/a-future-for-the-family-a-new-technology-agenda-for-the-right/>.

1. Incorporate a Family-Focused Strategy into the A.I. R&D Strategic Plan

To ensure that the federal government's development of A.I. promotes human flourishing, the administration should expand its strategy to evaluate the impact of A.I. on the family and develop standards and benchmarks to ensure that A.I. serves the best interests of the family. In the prior Trump Administration's *National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development and Strategic Plan: 2019 Update*, the Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence of the National Science and Technology Council outlined a number of strategies for A.I. R&D. Among these were strategies to "understand and address the ethical, legal, and societal implications of A.I.," as well as "measure and evaluate A.I. technologies through standards and benchmarks."⁴ A fundamental criterion of ethics is how personal, political, and even technological actions shape family life, for better or worse. The federal government should, therefore, incorporate human flourishing, with an emphasis on family well-being, in its A.I. R&D strategies and benchmarks. This ongoing focus would clearly differentiate the Trump Administration from the previous administration, which did not include such critical assessments in its strategic plan.

2. Establish an Office of Technology and the Family

In its effort to help the administration promote human flourishing in its A.I. R&D, OSTP could augment its understanding of the ethical, legal, and societal implications of A.I. by creating an Office of Technology and the Family whose primary responsibility is to evaluate how existing and future federal A.I. R&D efforts might affect family well-being. Its members could also advise OSTP senior leadership on how to promote human flourishing through tech-related policy and R&D generally, and how to monitor technological threats to family well-being emanating from A.I. and other emergent technologies.

3. Incorporate Family-Focused Personnel in A.I. Research and Development

To direct A.I. 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 A.I. R&D efforts of federal agencies on how to bolster and protect the family. The prior Trump Administration established three committees or subgroups to direct, implement, and coordinate A.I. R&D efforts: The Select Committee on A.I., The National Science and Technology Council Subcommittee on Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, and the A.I. 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 Executive Office of the President, *The National Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Strategic Plan: 2019 Update*, June 2019, iii.

4. Require Family Impact & Opportunity Assessments

Federal agencies involved with A.I. R&D efforts could also help the administration advance human flourishing by conducting regular assessments regarding the impact of A.I. 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 1999.⁵ Using this or similar language, agencies should evaluate how or whether a particular A.I. 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 the 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 A.I. R&D as well as the Office of Technology and the Family.

* * *

We commend these policy actions to the Trump Administration as essential to the development of a policy approach to A.I. that promotes human flourishing. Such actions will enable the administration to evaluate and monitor A.I.'s effect on the family and to create the framework for further policy actions that protect families from technology's threats and empower them with its benefits.

Respectfully,

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⁵ 5 USC 601