

January 8, 2026

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Jeffries,

We write to you as advocates of ensuring that artificial intelligence (AI) development does not come at the expense of workers, consumers, and democratic accountability. Since Donald Trump returned to office, Big Tech companies have effectively bought favor with the administration, putting the tech lobby in the driver's seat when it comes to AI policy. As Trump seeks to ban states from enacting common-sense AI regulations,¹ we are disappointed by your selection of members of Congress with close ties to Big Tech to the House Democratic Commission on AI and the Innovation Economy ("AI commission").²

As you know, panel appointees "rank among the House Democrats with the deepest ties to Big Tech and AI" in terms of legislative record, personal investments, and campaign finance history.³ These appointments don't just portend poorly for the party's ability to present an alternative vision for AI policy: they undermine Democrats' ability to champion the popular cause of AI regulation going into 2026. We are concerned that the commission does not incorporate the voices of strong advocates for AI accountability, and urge you to appoint members with pro-consumer, pro-worker policy records.

In particular, Reps. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) and Ted Lieu (D-CA) have been prominent Democrat opponents of key legislation aiming to rein in Big Tech,⁴ siding with industry lobbyists over American consumers. Lofgren has stood with Big Tech firms against regulation efforts in Washington as well as Sacramento,⁵ where she sided with Google against AI safety legislation.⁶ Her appointment is also concerning given her extensive history of campaign donations from the tech industry,⁷ her own financial interests in Big Tech firms,⁸ and familial ties to tech giants that

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/11/technology/ai-trump-executive-order.html>

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<https://jeffries.house.gov/2025/12/09/leader-jeffries-announces-new-house-democratic-commission-on-ai-and-the-innovation-economy/>

³ <https://readsludge.com/2025/12/09/the-democrats-new-ai-panel-is-led-by-big-tech-allies/>

⁴ <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/06/25/california-lawmakers-antitrust-496180>

⁵ <https://www.govtech.com/artificial-intelligence/members-of-congress-pushed-back-on-californias-ai-bill>

⁶ <https://www.govtech.com/artificial-intelligence/members-of-congress-pushed-back-on-californias-ai-bill>

⁷ <https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/zoe-lofgren/contributors?cid=N00007479&cycle=CAREER>

⁸ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-tech/2021/12/21/return-of-the-jedi-cloud-lobbying-wars-799579>

pose a potential conflict of interest.⁹ Lieu has publicly cautioned against moving quickly on AI regulation¹⁰ and echoed industry arguments that guardrails undermine “innovation.”¹¹

Your two other chosen Co-Chairs,¹² Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Rep. Valerie Foushee (D-NC), have already taken on stances that concede to the AI industry's wishlist. Gottheimer, a former Microsoft employee who *Sludge* reported owns millions worth of stock in the company, has been a proponent of AI deregulation. Earlier this year, he co-introduced a bill this year to deregulate banks' use of AI technology, which has been met with alarm by over 60 advocacy groups.¹³ Equally concerning, Gottheimer has signaled that he and the commission are open to Republican efforts to undermine states' regulation of AI, saying House Democrats “are not against federal preemption bills, if they have appropriate carve-outs.”¹⁴ This willingness to subvert state AI regulation could prevent states like California from developing an innovative regulatory system capable of contending with a new threat like AI, instead entrusting this all important power to a White House that has been thoroughly corrupted by the AI industry.¹⁵

Rep. Valerie Foushee (D-NC), in her role within the New Democrat Coalition, reportedly helped write the caucus' “Innovation Agenda,” which took an industry-friendly approach to AI regulation.¹⁶

In a divided political landscape, the cause of regulating harmful AI is a political winner with rare support across party lines.¹⁷ In November's elections, the cause of holding tech companies accountable for AI data centers' harms to consumers proved to be a winning issue for Democrats.¹⁸ Going into the 2026 midterms, Democrats can and must present a vision for AI policy that breaks with Trump's deregulatory vision. No rational person can trust Big Tech companies to implement AI safeguards to protect jobs, prevent AI-related security threats, and stop AI systems from harming vulnerable users, particularly children. For Democrats to meet the moment on AI policy, the party needs to elevate voices committed to reasonable guardrails on

⁹ <https://nypost.com/2021/12/07/major-antitrust-adversary-in-congress-has-daughter-on-googles-legal-team/>

¹⁰ <https://www.politico.com/minutes/congress/06-20-2023/lieu-ai-warning-congress/>

¹¹ <https://time.com/collection/time100-ai/6310636/ted-lieu/>

¹²

<https://jeffries.house.gov/2025/12/09/leader-jeffries-announces-new-house-democratic-commission-on-ai-and-the-innovation-economy/>

¹³ <https://ourfinancialsecurity.org/news/orgsopposeailegislation/>

¹⁴

<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/digital-future-daily/2025/12/10/data-centers-are-the-next-space-oddy-00685132>

¹⁵ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-ballroom-donors-white-house-stand-to-gain/>

¹⁶ <https://prospect.org/2025/12/12/democratic-voters-clamoring-for-ai-regulation-leaders-arent-interested/>

¹⁷ <https://navigatortresearch.org/views-of-ai-and-data-centers/>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/11/06/republicans-democrats-now-equally-concerned-about-ai-in-daily-life-but-views-on-regulation-differ/>

<https://ifstudies.org/press-release/new-poll-shows-americans-overwhelmingly-oppose-federal-preemption-of-state-ai-regulations>

¹⁸

<https://fortune.com/2025/11/05/elections-ai-data-centers-politics-democrats-republicans-virginia-new-jersey-georgia>

AI, not members with track records of deferring to Big Tech on one of the biggest issues of our time.

Sincerely,

Revolving Door Project

A2 (Anthropocene Alliance)

Athena Coalition

Backbone Campaign

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Digital Democracy

Center for Oil & Gas Organizing

Climate and Community Institute

National Black Justice Collective

Next 100 Coalition

Stand.earth

The Open Markets Institute