

White House AI Policy Update: Utah AI Bill Opposition, Tech Corps Launch, and State of the Union Data Center Announcements — AI: The Washington Report

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VIEWPOINT TOPICS

- Artificial Intelligence
- AI: The Washington Report

Main Points

- On February 15, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs sent a one-line memo to Utah lawmakers expressing the administration's opposition to [HB 286](#), a bill introduced by a Republican House member that would impose strict transparency and child safety requirements on large AI developers, according to multiple news reports.
- Despite President Trump's December Executive Order, [Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence](#), which hinted at an exemption from federal preemption for state laws addressing child safety risks in AI, as we have [previously covered](#), the administration has nevertheless opposed the Utah bill, which is framed around child safety and transparency disclosures.
- On February 20, Michael Kratsios, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), [announced](#) the "Tech Corps" initiative within the Peace Corps aimed at promoting American AI abroad.
- The Tech Corps initiative is in alignment with Pillar III of the White House AI Action Plan, which was announced last summer and which emphasizes expanding the global reach of US AI technologies.
- At the State of the Union on February 24, President Trump announced forthcoming agreements where technology firms would pay to support their own data center power needs, amid increasing scrutiny over rising electricity costs. Tech companies "have the obligation to provide for their own power needs" for data centers, said President Trump.

White House Opposes Utah AI Transparency Bill Amid Broader Federal Preemption Push

On February 15, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs sent a one-line memo to Utah lawmakers expressing the administration's opposition to [HB 286](#), a bill introduced by a Republican House member that would impose strict transparency and child safety requirements on large AI developers, according to multiple news reports. The White House characterized the Republican-sponsored bill as "an unfixable bill that goes against the Administration's AI Agenda." Despite President Trump's December Executive Order, [Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence](#), which hinted at an exemption from federal preemption for state laws addressing child safety risks in AI, as we have [previously covered](#), the administration has nevertheless opposed the Utah bill, which is framed around child safety and transparency disclosures.

The Utah bill, if enacted, would create a state-level framework requiring large frontier AI developers to publicly disclose safety protocols and child protection measures. The bill also creates whistleblower protections and reporting mechanisms, and requires developers to publish summaries of risk assessments and mitigation strategies to promote transparency. HB 286 passed unanimously out of the Utah House Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee and is waiting to be called for a final House floor vote. Although the bill's ultimate path forward remains uncertain, Utah Governor Spencer Cox has stated that "regulation should be left to the states," reflecting a view that is centered on

preserving state authority for AI regulation.

In an [interview](#) with Utah's NPR affiliate KUER, the bill's sponsor, Rep. Doug Fiefia, expressed optimism about continued dialogue with the White House, describing the legislation as the beginning of an ongoing conversation about AI regulation, particularly with respect to addressing the "catastrophic risks" AI chatbots may pose to children.

The administration's opposition to HB 286 can be viewed within the context of its broader AI policy framework. The White House's AI agenda has consistently emphasized centralizing federal authority and limiting a patchwork of state-level AI regulations. The December Order includes explicit carve-outs under Section 8(b) for categories of state laws that should not be proposed for preemption, including child safety protections. However, while the December Order signals that certain child safety laws may fall outside the scope of federal preemption recommendations, it does not categorically exempt all state AI laws that invoke child safety rationales. The administration appears to retain discretion to challenge measures it views as "onerous" or inconsistent with national AI competitiveness objectives, as seen with the White House's expressed opposition for Utah's bill.

As we previously reported, the December Order represents a significant shift toward federal preemption in AI governance through executive action. The administration's opposition to HB 286 marks one of the first instances in which the White House has publicly pushed back on Republican state legislators following issuance of the December Order. As such, the Utah bill may serve as an early test case for how aggressively the administration intends to assert federal primacy in AI policy. More broadly, targeting HB 286 could signal to other states considering AI safety legislation that federal authorities may scrutinize or challenge such efforts, even when they are narrowly tailored to transparency and child protection.

White House Announces "Tech Corps" Initiative to Export AI

While tensions over domestic AI regulation continue, the administration is simultaneously advancing initiatives designed to expand US AI leadership abroad. On February 20, Michael Kratsios, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), **announced** the "Tech Corps" initiative within the Peace Corps aimed at promoting American AI abroad. The [website](#) for the Tech Corps has launched and is accepting applications for volunteers to "build technical capacity, support AI adoption across critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and agriculture, and address barriers to last-mile implementation of AI solutions."

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit, Director Kratsios stated that Tech Corps "will embed volunteer technical talent with import partners to provide last-mile support in deploying powerful AI applications for enhanced public services." The initiative aligns with Pillar III of the White House AI Action Plan, which emphasizes expanding the global reach of US AI technologies. As the AI Action Plan states, "[t]he United States must meet global demand for AI by exporting its full AI technology stack — hardware, models, software, applications, and standards — to all countries willing to join America's AI alliance."

Taken together, the Trump administration's domestic preemption posture and international export strategy reflect a double-pronged approach: limiting regulatory fragmentation at home while expanding market share and technological influence abroad.

Data Center Agreements Unveiled at the State of the Union

The administration's AI strategy also intersects with energy policy, particularly as demand for data center capacity continues to grow. At the State of the Union on February 24, President Trump announced forthcoming agreements where technology firms would pay to support their own data center power needs, amid increasing scrutiny over rising electricity costs. Tech companies "have the obligation to provide for their own power needs" for data centers, said President Trump.

Details of the agreements, including their enforceability, have not yet been released, though they are reportedly scheduled to be signed at the White House in the coming week. With midterm elections

approaching, President Trump's "ratepayer protection pledge" highlights concerns about energy affordability, particularly in battleground states experiencing rapid growth in data center development to support AI workloads.

As the White House continues to frame AI as central to US competitiveness and economic growth, the energy demands of large-scale computing infrastructure have become an increasingly salient policy issue. The expansion of AI capabilities has driven corporations to accelerate data center construction, placing new pressures on regional power grids and raising questions about cost allocation between technology companies and residential consumers.

Authors

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