Senator Schumer Opening Statement
Eighth AI Insight Forum
December 6, 2023

Welcome to the Senate's eighth and penultimate bipartisan AI Insight Forum, on the long-term risks of AI and preventing doomsday scenarios.

Thanks to my colleagues Senators Rounds, Heinrich, and Young and their staffs for helping organize this forum.

Thanks to my Senate colleagues and staff here today. And, of course, thanks to our participants.

For everyone's awareness, here's how the morning will look:

The first hour of the forum will focus on the long-term risks of AI, and the second hour will focus on potential solutions.

I will start us off, followed by Senator Young, and we will largely focus on the risks side of the equation, and then Senators Rounds and Heinrich will close us out with a discussion on the potential solutions at play.
Much ink has been spilled over the potential widespread harm of AI, including existential risk and doomsday scenarios.

We all remember the letter sent earlier this year from scientists, experts, and tech leaders expressing their fear that we do not adequately understand the potential risk of advanced AI and calling for a six-month pause on AI development.

Unsurprisingly, there is a great deal of public concern over the rapid advancement of AI, and a lot of questions about what the future could hold.

For example, could AI systems be used to more easily create a deadly novel pathogen or surpass the capabilities of even the smartest humans?

This forum will be an opportunity to discuss such risks in concrete and sober terms. The goal is not to cause panic, but to seriously consider what guardrails, if any, should be put in place to prevent the long-term harms of unchecked AI development.

Today's discussion will likely touch on some of the pressing issues in highly capable AI systems:

The pros and cons of open sourcing AI models and model weights.

The push to develop Artificial General Intelligence, or super-intelligent AI, that would be so powerful and capable that we would see it as a "digital god."

Our lack of understanding of how increasingly advanced AI systems will interact with each other, particularly as deployment increases across all sectors and less and less supervision is provided.

What the next breakthrough in AI development could be, following the explosion of large language models like ChatGPT, and how many more of these breakthroughs stand between us and super-intelligent AI.

And if the U.S. puts guardrails in place to prevent or slow AGI development, will other countries do the same?

Thankfully, we don't have to answer these questions ourselves, as we are joined today by some of the world's leading experts for our discussion.

Before we get into it, I want to make a quick observation:

We have heard a lot about how AI is the new fire or electricity, or the same as nuclear power or bioweapons.

Today, I ask you all to use new metaphors and analogies, and avoid anything so clumsy as the usual fare.

AI is the ultimate dual-use technology, neither as innocuous nor a guaranteed net positive as electricity or fire, but not as inherently powerful or dangerous in the majority of applications as nuclear power or bioengineering.

I hope we will spend our time today on the specific policy solutions necessary to avert the long-term risks of AI and the potential doomsday scenarios.

Thanks again for being here, and I look forward to hearing from all of you.