

Durbin Joins Colleagues To Introduce Bipartisan Legislation To Improve Ai Testing And Evaluation Systems, Safeguard Americans Against Risks

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Co-Chair of the Senate National Labs Caucus, joined U.S. Senators Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), Jim Risch (R-ID), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), and John Thune (R-SD), to introduce the bipartisan *Testing and Evaluation Systems for Trusted Artificial Intelligence (TEST) AI Act*, legislation that would improve the federal government’s capacity to test and evaluate Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems to drive innovation, protect national security, and safeguard Americans against risks.

The *TEST AI Act* leverages the unique expertise and resources of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to advance AI innovation and guardrails. NIST's deep expertise in AI risk management, combined with the technical expertise and computational and data resources provided by DOE's National Labs will enable the U.S. government to conduct practical and meaningful assessments of AI systems across sectors.

“Artificial intelligence is here, and it is changing the way we approach our world. It holds enormous positive potential, but like with any new technology, AI must be tested thoroughly to ensure it is used responsibly,” said Durbin. “With the *TEST AI Act*, we can direct the Department of Energy and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop AI testbeds, allowing us to safely explore the boundaries of AI, outline necessary oversight, and protect against the misuse of this technology.”

The *TEST AI Act* directs NIST to coordinate, through a memorandum of understanding, with DOE to establish testbeds for testing and evaluation of trusted AI systems to advance AI tools, capabilities, and workforce needs; improve reliability and trustworthiness of commercial and federal AI systems; and establish testbeds, including classified testbeds as necessary, to support safeguards and systems to test, evaluate, and prevent misuse of AI systems.

Durbin applauded the [White House Executive Order on AI](#) released earlier this week, particularly as the executive order included the creation of NIST-DOE testbeds, which further highlights the critically important role that NIST and DOE must play in the development and oversight of trusted AI systems. As machine learning and AI systems have reached every sector, there is a critical need to build government capacity and ability to conduct rigorous evaluations and assessments that address vulnerabilities, risks, and malicious use of AI systems. While inclusion of NIST-DOE testbeds in the White House Executive Order is a step in the right direction, the *TEST AI Act* enables a more permanent solution to the question of government capacity to assess AI systems.

A summary of the bill is available [HERE](#). Full text of the bill is available [HERE](#).

Earlier this year, Durbin, Luján, Risch, and Blackburn launched the [Senate National Labs Caucus](#) to identify legislative opportunities that elevate the Labs' visibility and meet national energy and security objectives. The National Labs, including Illinois' own Argonne and Fermilab, are uniquely positioned to lead the nation in developing and evaluation AI systems. This caucus also helps identify bipartisan initiatives to maintain and extend U.S. leadership in critical scientific sectors.