

What I Learned Serving as an AI Fellow in the U.S. Congress

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JPL, February 9, 2026



Dr. Kiri Wagstaff

- Computer Science, AI, Machine Learning (Ph.D.)
 - Geology (M.S.), Library and Information Science (MLIS)
- NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (2003 – 2022)
 - Machine learning for space exploration
 - Mars rover operations (Opportunity rover)
- Oregon State University since 2019
 - “Machine Learning Challenges in the Real World” course
 - Special Advisor on AI for the OSU Libraries
- Artificial Intelligence Advisor for U.S. Senator Mark Kelly (2023 – 2024)



Mars Desert Research Station



U.S. Congress

Why was I in Washington, D.C.?

AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship (STPF)

July 31, 2023

AAAS is seeking scientists and engineers from a wide range of disciplines who can contribute the expertise needed to support evidence-based policymaking germane to artificial intelligence in this next year. We are seeking professionals for this **AI Rapid Response STPF Cohort**, who could **apply by August 5th 2023** and be ready to begin the program on **September 1, 2023** in **Washington, DC.**

August 15, 2023: Panel interview (Zoom)

August 18, 2023: Job offer

August 30, 2023: Flight to DC



AAAS STPF “Rapid Response AI Cohort” 2023-2024

Eoghan Stafford
(Centre for the Governance
of AI, Ph.D. UCLA)

Soribel Feliz
(Microsoft, Meta,
Dept. of State)

Kiri Wagstaff
(NASA JPL, OSU,
Ph.D. Cornell)

Rebecca Voglewede
(Nat’l Inst. on Deafness,
NIH, Ph.D. Tulane)

Serena Booth
(UT Austin, Google,
Ph.D. MIT)



Cynthia Bailey
(Stanford Univ., Ph.D. UCSD)

What did I do inside the Senate?

- Provide technical analysis of proposed AI legislation
 - Plus NASA, commercial space, and aviation legislation
- Develop ideas for new AI legislation; forge bipartisan teams
- Meet with constituents, companies, and federal agencies to capture their priorities and concerns
- Provide staff training on use of AI within the office
- Learn how Congress gets things done



AI is everywhere and that's great!



Introducing **Copilot**,
Your AI-powered Research Reading



GitHub
Copilot

The AI companion who cares



How are you feeling today?

The AI companion who cares



How are you doing today?

The AI companion who cares



What are you up to today?

Zoom AI Companion
Work happy with Zoom AI Companion

Meet Khanmigo,
Khan Academy's
AI-powered teaching
assistant & tutor

But wait... is there a down side?

Safety	Bias	Privacy
Deception	Misinformation	Copyright
Liability	Environmental impacts	National security
Education	Elections	Finance

Federal AI legislation activity – 118th Congress

Status of Legislation	
Check all	
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	[418]
<input type="checkbox"/> Committee Consideration	[133]
<input type="checkbox"/> Floor Consideration	[36]
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed One Chamber	[32]
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed Both Chambers	[6]
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolving Differences	[6]
<input type="checkbox"/> To President	[5]
<input type="checkbox"/> Became Law	[5]

congress.gov

- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2024
 - AI for aerial refueling (pilot program) and Navy shipyards
 - DoD AI bug bounty program
 - Prize competition for AI watermarking
- FAA Reauthorization Act
 - AI/ML for airport efficiency, safety, and ATC training
- Fire Grants and Safety Act
 - Assess AI/ML methods to inform oversight and inspection decisions for nuclear reactors/materials
- DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act
 - Can use AI to detect “new substances”
- NDAA 2025
 - Several AI R&D programs, AI education, AI for operations/audits

=> No AI regulation action

Federal AI legislation activity – 119th Congress

Status of Legislation	
Check all	
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	[351]
<input type="checkbox"/> Committee Consideration	[53]
<input type="checkbox"/> Floor Consideration	[34]
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed One Chamber	[32]
<input type="checkbox"/> Passed Both Chambers	[5]
<input type="checkbox"/> Resolving Differences	[2]
<input type="checkbox"/> To President	[4]
<input type="checkbox"/> Became Law	[4]

congress.gov

- TAKE IT DOWN Act
 - Prohibits non-consensual “intimate visual depictions”
 - Whether “authentic” or computer-generated
 - Platforms must remove content within 48 hours on request
- OBBBA
 - Funding for AI in drones, DOD audits, R&D
- GENIUS Act
 - AI for anti-money laundering
- NDAA 2026
 - National Security and Defense AI Institutes (research)
 - Cross-functional Team for AI Model Assessment and Oversight (evaluation)
 - AI Sandbox Task Force (testing)
 - AI Futures Steering Committee (risk mitigation)
 - Prohibition on AI use (DeepSeek, High Flyer)

State-level activity

- **California** Consumer Privacy Act (2018): right to know, delete, opt out of sale of personal data; private right to action for data breaches
- **California** Privacy Rights Act (2020): add right to correct + limit disclosure
- **Oregon** Consumer Privacy Act (2024): right to access, correct, copy, delete personal data
 - **Universal Opt-Out**: no targeted advertising or sale of your data (web browser/extension)



- **California** AB 2013 (2024): must describe generative AI training data contents
 - xAI lawsuit alleges AB 2013 requires revealing proprietary information
- **California** SB 53 (2025): Transparency in Frontier Artificial Intelligence Act (AI safety framework)
- **Executive order**: “Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence” (Dec. 2025) – evaluate and challenge state AI laws inconsistent with administration policy of “global AI dominance”

Legislating artificial intelligence

- Develop a list of ideas for AI-related legislation
- Get feedback and prioritization from Senator Kelly
- Develop and mature the ideas with a great team
- Let's zoom in on one of these...
 - Consumer AI Literacy



Gaps in AI literacy cause harm

Two US lawyers fined for submitting fake court citations from ChatGPT

“We made a good-faith mistake in failing to believe that a piece of technology could be making up cases out of whole cloth.” *The Guardian, June 23, 2023*

Lawyer apologizes for fake quotes, fabricated judgments generated by AI in murder case

Updated on: January 27, 2026 / 6:21 AM EST / CBS/AP

“The lawyers explained they checked that the initial citations were accurate and wrongly assumed the others would also be correct.” *NBC News, January 26, 2026*

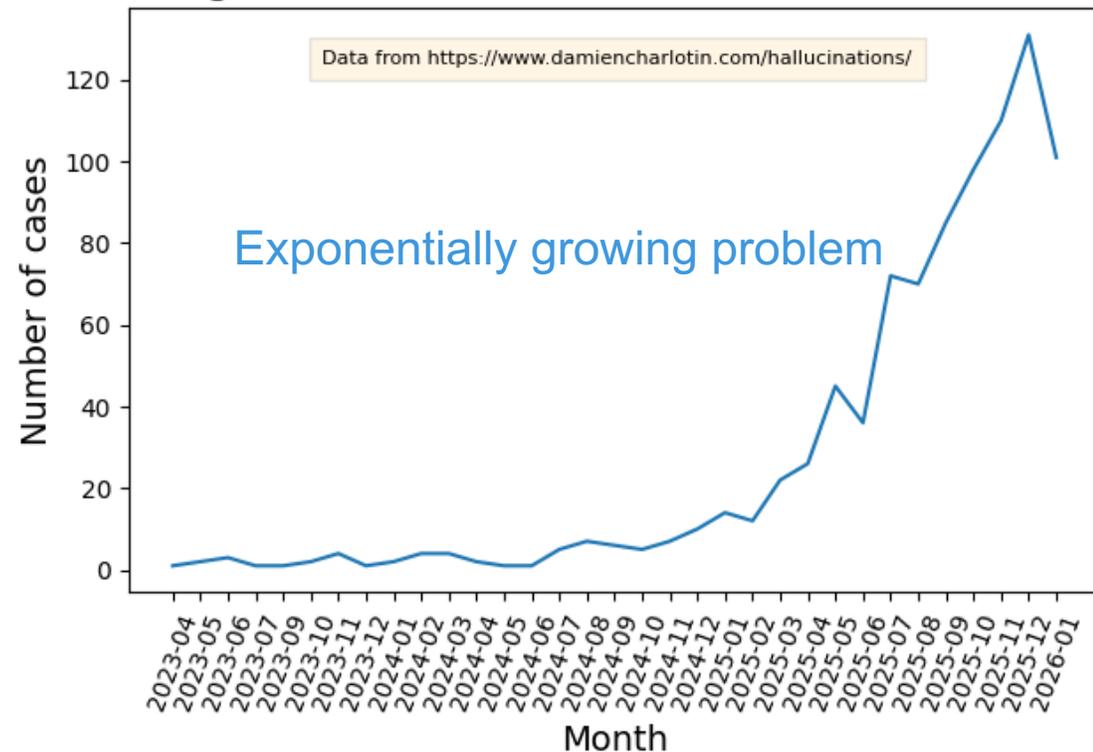
“Harm” is not just to lawyers and firms, but also to the people and lives they represent

Kiri L. Wagstaff

AI Hallucination Cases
(generative AI issues mentioned in legal decisions)
891 cases to date

<https://www.damiencharlotin.com/hallucinations/>

Legal decisions that mention AI hallucinations



Consumers LEARN AI Act

Consumer Literacy and Empowerment to Advance Responsible Navigation of Artificial Intelligence Act

National strategy



Multilingual public campaign



Specific use cases

- Personal finance
- Healthcare recommendations
- Communication
- Creative works
- Business management

- AI capabilities and limitations
- Where AI is or can be used in daily life
- Best practices: data privacy, legal considerations, evading deception

Senators Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Mike Rounds (R-SD) introduced the bill on July 30, 2024



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118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to develop a national strategy regarding artificial intelligence consumer literacy and conduct a national artificial intelligence consumer literacy campaign.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to develop a national strategy regarding artificial intelligence consumer literacy and conduct a national artificial intelligence consumer literacy campaign.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Consumer Literacy
5 and Empowerment to Advance Responsible Navigation of
6 Artificial Intelligence Act” or the “Consumers LEARN AI
7 Act”.

Next steps

- Commerce committee consideration
- House companion bill (Sept. 19, 2024)
- Re-introduced in the 119th Congress in combination with another AI education bill (May 8, 2025)

OSU AI Literacy Center



Oregon State University
AI Literacy Center

- Mission: equip students, faculty, and staff with the knowledge and skills needed to critically engage with generative AI
- Collaboration: OSU Library + Center for Teaching and Learning
- Seminars, workshops, videos, resource guides
- Visit: <https://ailiteracycenter.oregonstate.edu/>



Laurie Bridges
Director



And the technological advancement of AI has raised a lot of concerns.

Kiri L. Wagstaff

Alejandro Schaeuffler



will give you the tools to more safely navigate an increasingly digital world.

Havel Konda



concepts ranging from AI hallucinations to the deeper components

Autumn Borrueel

January 29, 2026

Example: Auto insurance discounts

AI literacy beyond
generative AI

Get Snapshot from Progressive

We've handed out over \$1.2 billion in discounts!

snapshot®



Turning good driving into big savings.

Your rate may increase with high-risk driving. But, only about 2 out of 10 drivers actually get an increase.

Progressive: [Snapshot](#)

- Auto insurance discounts / “usage-based” insurance
 - Reward for sharing your driving activity / patterns
- Would you sign up? How do you decide?
 - Data privacy vs. financial incentive
 - No one right answer; goal is to make informed decisions



State Farm: [Drive Safe & Save](#)

What can you do?

- Share: What AI issues are being overlooked? Overhyped?
 - Subscribe to congress.gov alerts for AI/topics of interest, individual bills
- Respond to Requests for Information (RFIs)
 - White House AI Action Plan: >10,000 comments
 - White House AI R&D Plan: 350 comments
 - OSTP Accelerating the American Science Enterprise RFI: >12,000 comments
- Write a one-page policy brief. Ideally, deliver it in person.
 - Contact your senators and representatives – they want to hear from you
- Engineers and Scientists Acting Locally (ESAL)
 - Give local talks, write letters to the editor

American Public Submits Over 10,000 Comments on White House's AI Action Plan

April 24, 2025



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Refined by: "artificial intelligence" Legislation 119 (2025-2026) Introduced

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- Uncheck all
- Legislation [351]

Congress

- Check all
- 119 (2025-2026) [351]
- 118 (2023-2024) [418]

Show more

Chamber of Origin

- House [213]
- Senate [138]

Bill Type

BILL

1. [H.R.5784](#) — 119th Congress (2025-2026)
AI-WISE Act
Sponsor: [Scholten, Hillary J. \[Rep.-D-MI-3\]](#) (Introduced 10/17/2025) **Cosponsors:** (6)
Committees: House - Small Business | Senate - Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Committee Report: [H. Rept. 119-405](#)
Latest Action: Senate - 01/26/2026 Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. ([All Actions](#))
Tracker: Introduced → **Passed House** → Passed Senate → To President → Became Law

BILL

2. [H.R.334](#) — 119th Congress (2025-2026)
To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish technical and procedural standards for artificial or prerecorded voice systems created through generative artificial intelligence, and for other purposes.
Sponsor: [Allen, Rick W. \[Rep.-R-GA-12\]](#) (Introduced 01/13/2025) **Cosponsors:** (0)
Committees: House - Energy and Commerce
Latest Action: House - 01/13/2025 Referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. ([All Actions](#))
Tracker: **Introduced** → Passed House → Passed Senate → To President → Became Law

351 bills

Make an account to sign up for alerts on saved searches, individual bills, etc.

AI literacy for small businesses

Standards for prerecorded messages apply to generative AI calls, too

Summary – AI and Congress

- Congress is hungry for technical expertise
 - 36 AAAS Congressional fellows for ~90 openings
 - Congress wants to get things right
- Congress on the inside isn't what you see in the media
 - Daily hard work, research, negotiation, desire to make the world a better place
 - Vs. sensationalism, scandals, sound bites, personalities
- We have almost no federal AI regulation (so far)
- Individual voices (yours!) can have large influence

Thank you!

Resources for you: <https://www.wkiri.com/AIpolicy>

Contact: wkiri@wkiri.com

