

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

Nomination Hearing
Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

COVER PAGE
Mr. Kratsios

RANKING MEMBER MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)

Scale AI. After leaving the first Trump Administration, you joined the startup company Scale AI as its first-ever Managing Director. A core component of Scale AI's business is using independent contractors—often known as “taskers”—to review and label data sets that train AI models.

Scale AI has been accused of mistreating its workers and outsourcing much of its work to countries with weak labor practices. For example, an August 2023 Washington Post report documented how Scale AI set up shop in the Philippines, where labor protections are notoriously lax. Once there, the company allegedly delayed and canceled payments to workers, and often paid below the minimum wage.

More recently, Scale AI has faced multiple lawsuits in the United States, alleging, among other things, that the company misclassifies its workers to withhold pay and other benefits. Alarming, one recent lawsuit claims the company also required some workers to view disturbing images of traumatic events, such as assaults on children, murders, and fatal car accidents, without proper safeguards, which resulted in psychological distress.

My Office has also received complaints from multiple whistleblowers regarding Scale AI. These former Scale AI workers detail concerning labor practices, including wage theft and other broken promises on compensation. I take whistleblower complaints like these very seriously.

1. Mr. Kratsios, as Managing Director of Scale AI, what steps did you take to ensure Scale AI's workers were fairly compensated?

***Answer:* While at Scale AI, I did not work on the part of the business the dealt with taskers, which Scale calls contributors.**

2. How did you ensure that Scale AI workers were not put into an unsafe position with respect to reviewing traumatic prompts and other materials?

***Answer:* While at Scale AI, I did not work on the part of the business the dealt with taskers, which Scale calls contributors.**

3. You have spoken about the importance of American leadership in AI. How is Scale AI's apparent business model of outsourcing work to foreign countries with weak labor protections consistent with this goal?

***Answer:* While at Scale AI, I did not work on the part of the business the deals with taskers, which Scale calls contributors. I do believe in strong American leadership in AI. If confirmed, I would work with stakeholders to encourage responsible supply-chain practices that uphold American values and maintain our competitive edge.**

4. If confirmed, will you advocate for and prioritize fair and ethical standards for the AI workforce?

Answer: While I was not involved in the Scale business related to contributors, I remain firmly committed to promoting policies that protect workers, advance innovation, and uphold American values.

President Trump Attacks on NSF Funding. Mr. Kratsios, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is responsible for coordinating with OMB to drive funding decisions for U.S. science and technology priorities. As you know, federal R&D spending occurs across 15 agencies, including the Department of Defense (DOD), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Science Foundation (NSF). If confirmed, you would play a critical role in driving these funding decisions.

A recent Science article reports that the Trump Administration is considering slashing NSF's annual budget by up to 66 percent. In addition, universities across the country, including in my state such as the University of Washington School of Public Health, are pausing offers to PhD students as well as offers of financial support to current graduate students. This would have devastating impacts on U.S. national and economic security interests. The United States cannot afford to retreat in the global race for critical next-generation technologies, like AI and quantum computing.

5. Mr. Kratsios, do you think cutting NSF's budget by two-thirds would further American leadership in emerging technologies?

Answer: The Trump Administration has not yet made a Budget request to Congress. If I am confirmed, I intend to work with OMB to set the Administration's R&D budget priorities and to work in partnership with Congress to fund those priorities to ensure American leadership in emerging technologies.

6. If confirmed, will you commit to protecting NSF's budget from the indiscriminate cuts we are seeing elsewhere across the federal government?

Answer: During my tenure as Chief Technology Officer of the United States, the National Science Foundation received record funding. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing an R&D agenda, including NSF funding, that ensures that the United States leads the world in fundamental scientific and technological advances to improve the lives of all Americans.

Space Commercialization. Mr. Kratsios, you have stressed the importance of leveraging innovation through partnerships between government, academia, and the private sector. Given the rapid evolution in space technology and the growing role of commercial entities, understanding your vision on public-private collaboration in space is critical for maintaining U.S. leadership.

7. How do you envision OSTP facilitating public-private partnerships specifically to drive innovation and economic growth in the commercial space sector?

Answer: I see public-private collaboration as a key component of the innovation ecosystem. If confirmed, I would encourage interagency coordination and stakeholder engagement to advance growth and competition in the commercial space sector.

8. What policy or strategy reforms would you recommend to the President to ensure that the commercial space industrial base continues to include new entrants with innovative approaches to providing space services and capabilities to maintain U.S. international competitiveness and avoid over-reliance on a small number of providers?

Answer: I support maintaining an environment that fosters competition and innovation. If confirmed, I would advise the President on measures that lower barriers to entry, encourage investment, and diversify participation in the space market.

Space System Resiliency and Sustainability. During your time at DOD, you focused broadly on technological leadership to protect our nation against malign actors and adversarial practices. The security of space assets such as satellites and associated communication and IT systems are an integral part of maintaining our economic and national security leadership in space. Understanding your recommended strategy on protecting these critical assets is essential.

9. What measures do you propose to enhance the resilience of U.S. space infrastructure, particularly to ensure that we do not become overly reliant on any single space company or single point of failure?

Answer: I believe resilience depends on robust R&D, diversified suppliers, and close public-private collaboration. If confirmed, I would promote a strategic approach that balances innovation with national security and avoids single points of failure.

International Science & Technology Cooperation. Mr. Kratsios, we have all observed how the Administration's focus in the early weeks on tariffs and trade have produced mixed responses from many of our traditional allies. Many of our greatest scientific achievements have benefited from robust international partnerships.

10. What recommendation do you intend to provide the President regarding the value of future large research and development projects with international partners and allies?

Answer: The United States has a strong history of leadership in global research and innovation. If confirmed, I will provide the President with assessments that prioritize national interests, scientific excellence, and strategic partnerships while ensuring that any international collaboration aligns with our economic and security priorities.

Artificial Intelligence. As Chief Technology Officer, you built the American AI Initiative that included five key lines of effort designed to advance AI research investment and build America's AI workforce. Congress codified the American AI Initiative in 2020.

Building upon this work, last Congress I introduced legislation to support the development of standards and testing for the most advanced AI models, as well as supporting education and training efforts on AI at NSF and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

11. Mr. Kratsios, do you support the development of standards and testing for the most advanced AI models?

Answer: **Yes, in general I support a framework that provides standards and testing without imposing excessive regulatory burdens.**

12. If confirmed, will you work with me on workforce development, education, and training for AI to ensure that the U.S. remains at the forefront of AI innovation?

Answer: **Yes.**

SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-MN)

1. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is the agency charged with partnering with industry and experts to develop standards that foster innovation.

- There are public reports that the Administration is planning to fire probationary employees at NIST, many of whom are new hires in AI. How will firing many of the AI experts the government has recently hired affect the government's ability to keep up with fast-moving developments in AI?
- If confirmed, will you commit to opposing the firing of these AI experts?

***Answer:* OSTP does not have hiring power over government agencies. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing an agenda that maintains American leadership in artificial intelligence, including expanding world-leading AI expertise here in the United States. I intend to leverage all resources—federal and nonfederal—to ensure America remains the unchallenged leader in technological development.**

2. We're facing a projected workforce shortfall in STEM fields—300,000 engineers and 90,000 skilled technicians in the U.S. by 2030. Minnesota faces a shortage of 18,000 workers in high-demand tech professions.

- How will you work to equip veterans and their spouses with the skills they need to pursue careers in high-demand fields?
- If confirmed, will you work to reduce barriers limiting the recruitment, retention, and success of women in academic and government STEM research careers?

***Answer:* Ensuring that all individuals, including veterans, their spouses, and women, have the opportunity to excel in STEM fields is essential for innovation. If confirmed, I will support efforts to identify and address barriers to recruitment, retention, and success in STEM careers, ensuring that the best talent has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from these high-demand fields.**

3. I am working to make sure we have stronger rules of the road in place when it comes to AI use. My bill with Majority Leader Thune—the *AI Research, Innovation, and Accountability Act*—for example, would improve testing and evaluation for critical-impact AI systems used to make decisions about critical infrastructure.

- In the past you've supported developing thoughtful federal standards that can help drive the widespread adoption of AI technologies across industries. If confirmed as OSTP Director, how do you plan to build on your previous work?

***Answer:* Establishing clear and robust AI standards is essential for widespread AI adoption across industries. Such standards, when not overly burdensome, provide a common framework that enables organizations to integrate AI solutions in a way that accelerates**

innovation and economic growth. I continue to believe in the importance of AI standards for innovation, and, if confirmed, will build on my past work to ensure continued progress.

SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ (D-HI)

On February 18, 2025, President Trump announced an Executive Order (EO) entitled, “Ensuring Accountability for All Agencies.” The EO institutes an unprecedented requirement for direct presidential oversight over actions, regulations, and strategic plans by independent agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

1. With the jurisdiction of the FTC, FCC, and SEC extending into science and technology related matters, how will OSTP be involved in the presidential oversight established by the EO?

Answer: I have not spoken to White House Counsel about this Executive Order. However, under the previous Trump Administration, I worked in partnership with many agencies to advance the President’s vision. I intend to again work with federal and non-federal actors to ensure the United States maintains “unquestioned and unchallenged global technological dominance,” as the President has said.

As Chief Technology Officer during President Trump’s first administration, you played a key role in crafting the administration’s original AI policies, such as the 2019 Executive Order entitled, “Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence,” where you highlighted how developing federal standards can drive the widespread adoption of AI systems throughout industry.

2. How do you plan to build on this work during your tenure?

Answer: Establishing clear and robust AI standards is essential for widespread AI adoption across industries. Federal standards provide a common framework that enables organizations to integrate AI solutions in a way that accelerates innovation and economic growth. I continue to believe in the importance of AI standards for innovation, and, if confirmed, will build on my past work to ensure continued progress.

3. If confirmed, will you advocate for the hiring or rehiring of technologists and AI experts at the National Institute of Standards and Technology to help develop standards in alignment with these goals?

Answer: NIST plays a critical role in developing AI standards that support innovation and competitiveness. If confirmed, I will look forward to assessing NIST’s current efforts to ensure NIST has the necessary expertise and resources to fulfill its mission effectively.

4. Will you commit to ensuring that AI adoption prioritizes public safety and consumer protection?

Answer: Public safety and consumer protection are important considerations in AI adoption. If confirmed, I will support efforts to assess how to best incorporate these priorities into policies that further innovation and economic growth.

According to reporting this week from the Pew Research Center, about half of U.S. workers are worried about the future impact of AI in the workplace.

5. How will you approach the challenge of preparing the American workforce for AI impacts?

Answer: AI is transforming the workforce, and it's important to assess its impact on jobs and skills development. If confirmed, I will support efforts to explore strategies that help workers adapt to technological changes, including education, training, and workforce development initiatives.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Education

Education in core skills needed to develop and deploy critical emerging technologies in the US is lagging behind our international counterparts, and could jeopardize our future economic competitiveness and national security. Relative to other countries, U.S. students' performance is declining in real-world math skills and computational thinking. In the field of quantum computing specifically, the US is already facing a severe talent shortage due to an insufficient pipeline of talent.

6. How will you advocate for improved STEM education in the U.S. today to strengthen our emerging technologies workforce of tomorrow?

Answer: STEM education is essential for maintaining U.S. leadership in emerging technologies. If confirmed, I will support efforts to assess and identify ways to enhance STEM education and workforce development to ensure a strong pipeline of talent for the future.

Under President Trump's first administration, concerns were raised about staffing levels at OSTP. In July 2017, it was reported that OSTP had just 35 staff compared to 135 under the prior administration. By April 2019, that number rose to just 58 staff.

7. Given the critical national security and economic concerns under OSTP's jurisdiction, will you commit to ensuring consistent staffing levels at OSTP, and that staff have sufficient technological and science expertise?

Answer: Maintaining expertise in science and technology is critical for OSTP's mission. If confirmed, I will assess the needs of the office to ensure it is positioned to provide the President with effective guidance on science and technology priorities.

8. Under President Trump's first administration, more than half of total OSTP staff were detailees, fellows, and IPAs. In light of the elimination of certain fellowship programs like the Presidential Management Fellowship, will you commit to hiring more full-time experts at OSTP to fulfill talent needs?

Answer: Ensuring OSTP has the necessary expertise to fulfill its mission is very important. However, given the limited OSTP budget, the use of detailees, fellows, and IPAs is essential for obtaining the critical science and technology expertise needed for OSTP to fulfill its mission. If confirmed, I will assess staffing needs and explore the most effective options to maintain a strong and capable team that supports the President's priorities.

In your testimony, you stated that “China has emerged as both our preeminent geopolitical rival and our most formidable technological and scientific competitor,” and described how OSTP will be critical in the effort to compete against global competitors.

9. Given the sensitivity of OSTP’s mission, what steps will you take to ensure the physical and cybersecurity of OSTP’s data and work?

Answer: If confirmed, I would prioritize robust security measures and consult with the relevant EOP components to maintain OSTP’s integrity.

Federal funding for scientific research has undergirded the economic and technological supremacy of the United States. It has been instrumental in developing transformative technologies used in our day-to-day lives, from the internet and GPS revolutionizing communication and navigation, to barcodes streamlining commerce, to MRI machines advancing medical diagnostics.

10. Given the important role of the government in supporting early, pre-commercialized science and technology research work, how will you encourage federal research investments?

Answer: Federal R&D investments are vital to sustaining America’s edge. If confirmed, I would work with OMB and relevant agencies to review current federal R&D investments and ensure these investments are efficient and effective.

11. How will you ensure that federal science and technology research is independent from potential conflicts of interest for members of the administration?

Answer: If confirmed, I would uphold conflict-of-interest guidelines and promote transparency in federal research programs.

During your confirmation hearing, you expressed that the President has the right to evaluate, make changes to, and align his team with his administration’s goals. In light of significant layoffs at agencies that drive scientific research and technological innovation and adoption, I am concerned these actions run contrary to our goals of American leadership and competitiveness on scientific and technological advancement.

12. Do you agree that promoting technical and scientific expertise in government advances our national interests and competitiveness?

Answer: Yes. The President has appointed accomplished experts and leaders across governmental agencies to advise on matters of technical and scientific expertise.

13. Will you commit to protecting the critical work of technical and scientific experts who are advancing our national science and technology interests as federal employees?

Answer: If confirmed, I will work with relevant agencies to better understand the scientific and technical work being administered and to promote an environment that values expertise and public service.

SENATOR EDWARD MARKEY (D-MA)

1. In your confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Commerce Committee you mentioned your support for artificial intelligence standards. Can you describe your plan for the creation of artificial intelligence standards?

***Answer:* If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the AI standards processes currently underway at NIST. The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. approach to standards will likely be part of that policy process.**

2. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology to convene a consortium of stakeholders to identify measurement needs and standards for artificial intelligence's environmental impacts?

***Answer:* If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the AI standards processes currently underway and discuss this approach with NIST. The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. approach to standards will likely be part of that policy process.**

3. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology to create a system for entities developing or operating artificial intelligence to voluntarily report the full range of artificial intelligence's environment impacts?

***Answer:* If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the AI standards processes currently underway with NIST. The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. approach to standards will likely be part of that policy process.**

4. What is OSTP's role in supporting AI's positive uses by protecting people, especially underrepresented communities, from the potentially harmful impacts of such technology?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. If confirmed, I look forward to working the interagency process on developing this plan and promoting the positive uses of AI.**

5. In 2022, OSTP issued a Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights. If you are confirmed, how would OSTP use that blueprint in the development of AI policy and requirements for the federal government?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about previous work done on AI by OSTP and working with the interagency process on developing this plan.**

6. What guardrails should there be for the federal government's use of AI tools and other technologies, and what is OSTP's role in the development of such guardrails?

Answer: If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with relevant agencies to ensure AI solutions in government meet high standards of accountability.

7. If confirmed, what is your plan to improve the working conditions, wages, and benefits of AI data workers?

Answer: While labor policies involve multiple agencies, if confirmed, I look forward to learning about current policies that support responsible practices within any federal AI-related initiatives.

8. If confirmed, what is your plan to ensure new and emerging technologies do not continue to be implemented in ways that harm workers?

Answer: The President has outlined a vision of empowering American innovators and workers. If confirmed, I would look forward to learning further how current policies implemented by the federal government impact workers and how these practices can better protect workers.

9. OSTP has been deeply engaged in AI issues, and the office recently issued a Request for Information on AI. If confirmed, will you commit to formally incorporating these submissions from the public record received to the May 2023 RFI on Automated Worker Surveillance and Management in any related decision-making during your tenure?

Answer: If confirmed, I would ensure relevant public feedback is considered as part of the broader interagency decision-making on AI policy.

10. There are reports that artificial intelligence and other technologies are being developed in order to determine where program funding should be cut and contracts should be cancelled. If confirmed, will you commit to providing transparency and publicly disclosing information around the use and development of these technologies?

Answer: I am not familiar with these reported AI use-cases, but if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the use of AI in government from relevant agencies.

11. There are reports that artificial intelligence and other technologies are being developed in order to determine which federal workers should be laid off, terminated, furloughed, transferred, or otherwise adversely impacted. If confirmed, will you commit to providing transparency and publicly disclosing information around the use and development of these technologies?

Answer: I am not familiar with these reported AI use-cases, but if confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the use of AI in government from relevant agencies.

12. Do you believe that bias and discriminatory artificial intelligence is a problem?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. policy approach to addressing these issues will likely be part of that policy process, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with interagency partners on it.**

13. If confirmed, what is your plan to address biased and discriminatory artificial intelligence, especially in critical areas such as health care, education, employment, and criminal justice?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. policy approach to addressing these issues will likely be part of that policy process, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with interagency partners on it.**

14. Do you believe that companies have an obligation to test, address, or measure its algorithms before deployment in order to determine whether it discriminates or is biased against protected characteristics?

***Answer:* Testing and evaluation are key components of any AI strategy. The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. policy approach to addressing these issues will likely be part of that policy process, and I look forward to working with interagency partners on it.**

15. Do you believe that companies have an obligation to monitor its algorithms after deployment in order to determine whether it discriminates or is biased against protected characteristics?

***Answer:* Testing and evaluation are key components of any AI strategy. The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. policy approach to addressing these issues will likely be part of that policy process, and I look forward to working with interagency partners on it.**

16. Do you support the Office of Technology Policy's Blueprint for an AI Bills of Rights?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about previous work done on AI by OSTP and working with interagency partners on developing this plan.**

17. Employers are increasingly relying on artificial intelligence in the selection and management of employees. However, time and time again it has been shown that AI can unlawfully discriminate. Do you support ensuring that artificial intelligence products

utilized by employers are not discriminatory or biased? What steps would you take, if confirmed, to protect workers from the discriminatory impacts of AI related to the hiring and management of workers?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. The U.S. policy approach to addressing these issues will likely be part of that policy process, and I look forward to working with interagency partners on it.**

18. NIST's Face Recognition Vendor Test has been an important tool in informing our understanding of the impact, bias, and performance of facial recognition technology. Do you commit to maintaining the program, including its independence in its scientific and voluntary assessments?

***Answer:* The President directed the OSTP Director and the National Security Advisor to develop an AI Action Plan. I look forward to working with interagency partners on it, including learning more about NIST's current programs.**

19. When you worked at the Office of Science and Technology Policy during the first Trump administration, did you witness significant waste and excess of the workforce during your tenure?

***Answer:* I focused on building an effective policy infrastructure at OSTP, while ensuring the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, I would again work with interagency partners to address critical science and technology challenges to ensure American leadership.**

20. Do you think the federal funding freeze will impact American research innovation?

***Answer:* It is important that the federal government reviews grant programs so that funding may be deployed efficiently and without red tape. Our researchers and scientists cannot be consumed by bureaucratic compliance, but instead must focus on innovating. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing an agenda that ensures America remains a leader in technological innovation.**

21. Do you think the federal workforce cuts will impact American research innovation?

***Answer:* OSTP does not have hiring power over government agencies. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing an agenda that maintains American leadership in emerging technologies, such as quantum, nuclear energy, and artificial intelligence. I intend to leverage all resources—federal and nonfederal—to ensure America remains the unchallenged leader in technological development.**

SENATOR GARY PETERS (D-MI)

1. At your nomination hearing, you mentioned prioritizing “high impact” versus “high risk” use cases for AI inventories. What markers are you using to determine what “high impact” is and isn’t?

Answer: **To assess if a use-case is high impact, a government agency could evaluate the scale of the problem it addresses, such as the number of people or resources affected. They could also estimate the magnitude of benefit and ensure it’s feasible with available resources. Use cases should also align with the agency’s mission and national priorities. Combining these factors can help identify efforts with the greatest potential impact.**

2. During President Trump’s first term, OSTP had open lines of communication with Congress. Do you commit to engaging with Congress, including the minority, this term?

Answer: **Yes.**

SENATOR BEN RAY LUJÁN (D-NM)

1. When you served as the US Chief Technology Officer during the first Trump Administration, you helped launch the National Quantum Coordination Office. In your testimony at this hearing, you supported the reauthorization of the National Quantum Initiative Act. If confirmed, will you ensure that quantum initiatives supported and coordinated by OSTP are inclusive of the variety of quantum computing (annealing and gate model systems), quantum sensing, quantum communications, and networking technologies available today?

Answer: If confirmed, I will ensure that the quantum initiatives supported and coordinated by OSTP are aligned with the National Strategic Overview for Quantum Information Science and subsequent strategy documents on quantum sensing, communications, and networking authored by technical quantum experts across the Federal interagency.

2. Sen. Blackburn and I previously introduced bipartisan legislation to establish a "sandbox-style" initiative for emerging technologies (quantum, AI, machine learning, autonomy, and more) aimed at developing applications quickly that help advance our domestic industrial base and provide small businesses access to emerging technologies. If confirmed, will you support this type of public-private partnership and other efforts to develop and accelerate near-term quantum applications?

Answer: I believe “sandbox-style” initiatives for emerging technologies that remove barriers to the development, testing, and evaluation of emerging technologies can help advance nascent industries and support the domestic industrial base for those technologies. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting innovative public-private partnerships that leverage the best of government, industry, and academia to develop and accelerate quantum technologies for the benefit of the American people.

3. I represent two prestigious DOE national labs dedicated to advancing scientific discovery and protecting our national security. Do you commit to advocating for the National Labs and the resources necessary for them to continue their essential R&D and national security missions?

Answer: I believe the DOE National Laboratories are the crown jewels of the Federal research and development enterprise. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the National Labs to continue their R&D mission in support of our national security and scientific advancement.

4. Should industry and government partners be investing in developing innovative technology to solve spectrum challenges of today and prepare for new challenges down the line?

Answer: Both industry and government have an important role to play in developing innovative technology to solve the spectrum challenges of today and the future.

5. Do you believe improving interagency coordination is important to improving the federal government's spectrum policy and strategy?

Answer: I believe interagency coordination is always important when multiple agencies have roles and responsibilities in the formulation of policy and strategy surrounding a

particular technological issue. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting interagency coordination efforts on spectrum policy.

SENATOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER (D-CO)

Federal researchers deliver the scientific breakthroughs and key medical treatments our country relies on. Colorado is a state with a deep and historic scientific enterprise, with labs for the Department of Energy, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Reports of thousands of federal researchers being laid off based on factors unrelated to their performance is deeply troubling. Our scientific enterprise strengthens our national security and propels our economy forward.

1. Mr. Kratsios, when you look at these layoffs to researchers and scientists, what message do you believe this sends to the international community and young aspiring scientists? What is your strategic plan to strengthen STEM education programs across the federal scientific enterprise to attract more K-12 students to pursue STEM pathways?

Answer: **STEM Education is critically important to our nation's continued leadership in science and technology. If confirmed, I will support efforts to promote and advance STEM education through multi-sector partnerships, ecosystem development, and the removal of barriers to participation in STEM pathways.**

2. While AI is already showing its potential for increasing productivity, there is also ongoing concern that AI will cause disruptions to our existing workforce. How will you approach the challenge of preparing the U.S. workforce for the AI-enabled economy, including through education, apprenticeships, and retraining programs?

Answer: **AI is transforming the workforce, and it's important to assess its impact on jobs and skills development. If confirmed, I will support efforts to explore strategies that help workers adapt to technological changes, including through education, training, and workforce development initiatives.**

In your prior role in the Trump Administration, you led the White House's implementation of the National Quantum Initiative. Colorado is home to world-leading quantum research at academic institutions and in the private sector. Quantum technology has the potential to revolutionize medical drug discovery, supercharge artificial intelligence, strengthen cybersecurity, and support our transition to clean energy. The Elevate Quantum Tech Hub, based in Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming, has built a diverse array of leaders in academia, workforce development, and private industry to expand workforce training and commercial-scale manufacturing for quantum technologies in the Mountain West. Additionally, Colorado is home to cutting edge quantum information science research being conducted at JILA, which is a longstanding collaboration between CU Boulder and NIST.

3. How will you continue to support the development of the next generation of quantum scientists our nation needs to maintain global competitiveness?

Answer: **If confirmed, I look forward to supporting Federal research and development initiatives that train the next generation of quantum scientists and provide them access to**

Federal research resources, such as our Federally funded quantum testbeds, that will prepare them to contribute to American leadership in quantum information science.

4. How will you lead OSTP to coordinate federal R&D activities to complement the work of hubs of innovation across the country?

***Answer:* If confirmed, I look forward to building a team of technical experts at OSTP and working with our interagency partners through the National Science and Technology Council to coordinate Federal research and development initiatives.**

5. How can OSTP help turn scientific breakthroughs into game-changing commercial technologies and companies?

***Answer:* I believe OSTP has an important role in developing and implementing strategies that support research and development, remove unnecessary barriers to innovation, promote workforce development, and lead international development of standards and regulations. These actions can support turning scientific breakthroughs into commercial technologies and ensuring American science and technology leadership on a global stage.**

6. Small businesses are leading much of the innovation in the quantum realm. Under the first Trump Administration, the National Quantum Presidential Advisory Council included small business innovators, academics, and key government offices. In what ways can OSTP and federal innovation policies support small businesses in the quantum sector to help maintain and advance American leadership in quantum technology?

***Answer:* Federal policies can support small businesses in quantum and other emerging technology areas by increasing their access to Federal research and development funding and resources, removing unnecessary administrative burdens, and training the next generation of quantum scientists and innovators.**

7. You played a key role in crafting the Trump Administration's original AI policies. These included the February 2019 Executive Order on Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence, which highlighted the ways that developing thoughtful federal standards can help drive the widespread adoption of AI technologies throughout industry. The National Institute of Standards and Technology has already published the AI Risk Management Framework that has been embraced by industry, and NIST continues their work in this realm.

If confirmed as OSTP Director, how do you plan to build on this work to advance standards for responsible AI research, development, and deployment?

***Answer:* AI research and development will not lead to the adoption of AI systems if those systems do not have the trust of the American people. If confirmed, I will seek to develop additional technical standards for the development and deployment of AI systems and to issue non-regulatory guidance to improve public trust in AI systems.**

8. How will you ensure that AI development in the U.S. is both innovative and secure, given the administration's emphasis on removing regulatory barriers?

Answer: **I do not believe there is an inherent tradeoff between advancing AI innovation and developing secure AI systems. If confirmed, I will ensure that Administration efforts to remove unnecessary barriers to innovation do so while maintaining the security standards needed for AI systems.**

9. The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission submitted its annual report to Congress in November 2024. As part of the Commission's review, it found substantial evidence that the United States and China are fiercely competing in the subdomains of quantum sensing, quantum communications, and quantum computing. As you know, the Congress has to reauthorize the National Quantum Initiative Act to guide federal R&D efforts, promote translation of quantum technologies to commercial applications, and invest in workforce training.

If confirmed to lead OSTP, what is your specific plan to promote U.S. advancements in the specific fields of quantum sensing, quantum communications, and quantum computing?

Answer: **If confirmed, I will ensure that the quantum initiatives supported and coordinated by OSTP are aligned with the National Strategic Overview for Quantum Information Science and subsequent strategy documents on quantum sensing, communications, and networking authored by an interagency group of technical experts.**

10. What recommendations would you provide Congress on how to strengthen and increase the resiliency of the quantum supply chain, including hardware?

Answer: **It is critically important that the United States maintains a secure, resilient quantum supply chain, including hardware in order to ensure continued American leadership in quantum information science. Doing so will require collaboration across stakeholders in industry, academia and Government to identify and fill gaps in technology, standards, and workforce.**

SENATOR LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER (D-DE)

Question 1: Do you believe AI systems are biased? As Director of OSTP, would you focus resources and attention on the issue of bias in AI?

Answer: **AI systems can produce inconsistent results either due to structural deficiencies in system design or the use of unrepresentative datasets during training. Engineers of AI systems should ensure that the systems they develop are designed appropriately for their specific use case.**

Question 2: Do you believe AI literacy is important for Americans? How will you work to promote AI literacy?

Answer: **If confirmed, I will work towards equipping workers with the skills needed for AI-enabled job opportunities.**

Question 3: What role do you think OSTP should play in strategic planning and coordination to prepare the workforce for an economy that is increasingly impacted by AI?

Answer: **OSTP has an important role to play in coordination across the Federal government, academia, and private sector to ensure that our workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future, including AI and AI-enabled occupations.**

Question 4: Do you think OSTP has a role in promoting and advancing STEM education as a strategy to ensure that our country has sufficient technical talent to lead and compete with adversaries like China?

Answer: **Yes. If confirmed, I will support efforts to promote and advance STEM education to ensure that the United States has the sufficient technical talent to lead and compete with our adversaries and strategic competitors.**

Question 5: Delaware has a robust life science, biotechnology, and precision medicine ecosystem. What is your vision for promoting U.S. leadership in these areas and other strategic and emerging science and technologies?

Answer: **In general, for biotechnology as well as other emerging technology areas, I believe it is important to develop and implement strategies that support research and development, remove unnecessary barriers to innovation, promote workforce development in these sectors, and lead international development of standards and regulations.**

Question 6: Do you think biotechnology and life science should be represented on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology?

Answer: **Yes.**

Question 7: What role do you see for OSTP in supporting entrepreneurship?

***Answer:* OSTP has an important role to play in fostering an innovation ecosystem by supporting policies that empower startups and “little tech,” including ensuring their access to Federal resources and reducing barriers to technology development.**

Question 8: A top priority of mine is securing our supply chains. I have been working on a bipartisan basis with Ranking Member Cantwell and Senator Blackburn on legislation to promote supply chain resilience. In your past roles, you have been mainly focused on technologies like AI and quantum.

Do you see a role for OSTP in helping secure our supply chains?

***Answer:* Ensuring resilience in and securing our supply chains for emerging technologies is critically important. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting interagency efforts to secure our supply chains.**

Question 9: Over the last several years, OSTP has worked to advance climate and environmental justice priorities. Delaware is the lowest lying state in the Union, making us particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and climate change.

If confirmed as the President’s top scientific advisor, would you advise dedicating technical resources to help improve climate resilience?

***Answer:* If confirmed, I will support interagency efforts to coordinate with states so that they are adequately prepared to address natural disasters and severe weather.**