August 11, 2025

Governor Jared Polis
Office of the Governor
200 E. Colfax
Denver, CO 80203-1716

A Call to Strengthen Colorado's AI Leadership in the Special Session

Dear Governor Polis,

On behalf of TechEquity Action, an organization advocating for people-first AI, we submit this letter commenting on the importance of AI guardrails as it relates to the upcoming special session on August 21. Through our work, we routinely engage with communities grappling with AI's real-world impacts and we hear a clear call for stronger AI protections.

High school students tell us they're worried about an uncertain future as employers automate their jobs. We've talked to seniors worried about insurers that use algorithms to deny necessary care, while giving doctors less than 2 seconds to review potentially life-changing medical decisions. These communities consistently ask, "what are we doing about this?" Until now, we've been able to point to Colorado as an answer. We tell them that while most governments are behind the ball in addressing these concerns, Colorado is leading the way.

Now, Colorado stands at a crossroads. It made history by passing the first comprehensive AI regulation in the United States, positioning Colorado alongside leaders like the European Union in protecting citizens from algorithmic harm. As corporate interests pressure policymakers to delay and weaken these protections, we urge you to do the opposite: strengthen Colorado's AI Act and cement your state's role as the architect of responsible AI innovation.

Coloradans Need More AI Protection, Not Less

Every day that passes without strong AI guardrails, more Coloradans face decisions made by algorithms they cannot see, understand, or challenge. These aren't theoretical concerns—they're happening right now:

Healthcare algorithms favor white patients over Black patients with identical medical needs. Employment screening tools can eliminate qualified candidates based on race and gender, or engage in age related discrimination. Housing algorithms determine who gets approved for rentals and discriminate against Black and Hispanic renters. Insurance algorithms deny claims that no human reviewer meaningfully examines. These types of systems are already deployed across Colorado, making consequential decisions about people's lives without transparency, accountability, or recourse.

The question isn't whether AI will transform Colorado's economy—it's whether that transformation will benefit everyone or just the companies building these systems. Without strong guardrails, AI becomes a tool for corporate efficiency at the expense of human dignity.

Building Colorado's Responsible AI Future

Rather than retreating from AI regulation, Colorado should be doubling down on building the infrastructure for responsible innovation. This moment is like the early days of automotive regulation: we didn't abandon safety standards because car manufacturers complained about costs—we built the framework that allowed the industry to thrive while protecting public safety.

Colorado's AI Act creates the foundation for an economy where technological advancement serves everyone. When companies must conduct bias assessments, they build better products. When people can appeal algorithmic decisions, systems become more accurate. When AI use is transparent, trust in technology grows. This isn't bureaucratic red tape—it's the infrastructure for sustainable innovation.

The industry voices pushing for delays and cuts to the law aren't concerned about stifling innovation or fiscal impacts to Colorado. They're worried about accountability cutting into profit margins, forcing them to retain workers to review automated decisions and ensure these consequential AI systems work properly. They want to deploy AI systems that optimize around weak regulations while externalizing the costs of discrimination, errors, and social harm onto Coloradans.

On the other hand, better AI systems attract more customers, more investment, and more innovation. Meanwhile, states that race to the bottom will find

themselves hosting AI systems that work well for corporate shareholders but create mounting social costs that workers and taxpayers ultimately bear.

If Colorado delays or weakens the AI Act now, you'll send a clear message: corporate pressure works. Other states watching Colorado's leadership will conclude that Big Tech opposition makes comprehensive AI regulation impossible. The result will be a race to the bottom, where states compete to offer the least protection for their citizens in exchange for corporate favor.

The Path Forward

We urge you to approach the special session not as an opportunity to weaken Colorado's AI Act, but to strengthen it. The law Coloradans passed was groundbreaking, but it was also conservative—focused on basic transparency and accountability measures that any responsible AI system should already include.

Instead of reducing requirements, we should expand them to cover more AI systems that affect Coloradans' lives, we need to make companies tell us more about how these systems work and hold them accountable when they don't. Colorado has shown the nation what responsible AI governance can look like and we ask you to continue to do so in this special session.

Sincerely,



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