

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 5050

To support an interdisciplinary research community for the advancement of artificial intelligence and AI-powered innovation through partnerships and capacity building at certain institutions of higher education and other institutions, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 21, 2026

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER (for herself and Mr. SHEEHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

---

## A BILL

To support an interdisciplinary research community for the advancement of artificial intelligence and AI-powered innovation through partnerships and capacity building at certain institutions of higher education and other institutions, and for other purposes.

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 “Expanding AI Voices  
5 through Capacity Building Act” or the “Expanding AI  
6 Voices Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANDING CAPACITY IN ARTIFICIAL INTEL-**  
2 **LIGENCE SCIENCE.**

3 Section 5401 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry  
4 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021  
5 (15 U.S.C. 9451) is amended—

6 (1) by redesignating subsection (g) as sub-  
7 section (h); and

8 (2) by inserting after subsection (f) the fol-  
9 lowing new subsection:

10 “(g) EXPANDING CAPACITY IN ARTIFICIAL INTEL-  
11 LIGENCE.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Na-  
13 tional Science Foundation, in consultation with the  
14 heads of Federal agencies the Director considers ap-  
15 propriate, shall make awards, on a competitive,  
16 merit-reviewed basis, to eligible entities to broaden  
17 participation in artificial intelligence research, edu-  
18 cation, and workforce development by strengthening  
19 the ability of the United States to increase capacity  
20 and partnerships for artificial intelligence research  
21 and development.

22 “(2) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out activi-  
23 ties under this subsection, a grant recipient may col-  
24 laborate with—

25 “(A) institutions of higher education, non-  
26 profit organizations, Federal agencies, State,

1 local, Tribal, and territorial governments, and  
2 private sector entities; and

3 “(B) artificial intelligence research insti-  
4 tutes established under section 5201 or recipi-  
5 ents of other relevant awards made by the  
6 Foundation.

7 “(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity shall  
8 use grant funds under this subsection to carry out  
9 one or more of the following:

10 “(A) Development or expansion of research  
11 programs in artificial intelligence and related  
12 disciplines.

13 “(B) Faculty recruitment and professional  
14 development in artificial intelligence and related  
15 disciplines.

16 “(C) Bridge programs focused on pre-  
17 paring post-baccalaureate students for graduate  
18 programs in artificial intelligence and related  
19 disciplines.

20 “(D) Providing or brokering access to re-  
21 search resources, including computing re-  
22 sources, networking, data facilities, and soft-  
23 ware engineering support for artificial intel-  
24 ligence research and development.

1           “(E) Workshops and listening sessions to  
 2           foster mutually beneficial public-private collabo-  
 3           ration with Federal research agencies, industry,  
 4           Federal laboratories, academia, and nonprofit  
 5           organizations.

6           “(F) Development and hosting of intra- or  
 7           inter-institutional workshops to broaden work-  
 8           force participation in artificial intelligence re-  
 9           search and development.

10           “(G) Activities to integrate safe, secure,  
 11           and reliable practices and principles into edu-  
 12           cation programs in artificial intelligence and re-  
 13           lated disciplines.

14           “(H) Other activities necessary to build re-  
 15           search capacity, education pathways, and work-  
 16           force development pathways in artificial intel-  
 17           ligence and related disciplines.

18           “(4) OUTREACH.—The Director of the National  
 19           Science Foundation shall—

20           “(A) conduct outreach to eligible institu-  
 21           tions of higher education and nonprofit organi-  
 22           zations to support application for awards under  
 23           this subsection; and

24           “(B) engage participants from all regions  
 25           of the United States, including eligible institu-

tions with limited artificial intelligence research capacity, to support broad participation in artificial intelligence research, education, and workforce development.

“(5) DUPLICATION.—The Director of the National Science Foundation shall ensure that awards made under this subsection are complimentary to, and not duplicative of, awards made under existing programs.

“(6) ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.—In making awards under this subsection, the Director of the National Science Foundation may also consider the following:

“(A) The extent to which eligible institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations applying for awards under this subsection expand opportunities for students to participate in artificial intelligence research, education, and workforce development, including first-generation undergraduate students.

“(B) The geographic diversity of such institutions and organizations.

“(C) Relative resource constraints of such institutions and organizations.

“(7) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

1           “(A) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligi-  
2           ble entity’ means—

3                   “(i) an eligible institution of higher  
4                   education, or a consortium of such institu-  
5                   tions; or

6                   “(ii) a consortium that is led by an el-  
7                   igible institution of higher education and  
8                   includes one or more nonprofit organiza-  
9                   tions.

10           “(B) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER  
11           EDUCATION.—The term ‘eligible institution of  
12           higher education’ means any of the following:

13                   “(i) An institution of higher edu-  
14                   cation, that, according to the data pub-  
15                   lished by the National Center for Science  
16                   and Engineering Statistics, is not, on aver-  
17                   age, among the top 100 institutions in  
18                   Federal research and development expendi-  
19                   tures during the 3-year period prior to the  
20                   year of the award concerned.

21                   “(ii) A minority-serving institution,  
22                   including a historically Black college or  
23                   university and a Tribal College or Univer-  
24                   sity.

1           “(C) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR  
 2           UNIVERSITY.—The term ‘historically Black col-  
 3           lege or university’ has the meaning given the  
 4           term ‘part B institution’ in section 322 of the  
 5           Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
 6           1061).

7           “(D) MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTION.—  
 8           The term ‘minority-serving institution’ means  
 9           an eligible institution under section 371(a) of  
 10          the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
 11          1067q(a)).

12          “(E) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The  
 13          term ‘nonprofit organization’ means an organi-  
 14          zation which is described in section 501(c)(3) of  
 15          the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt  
 16          from tax under section 501(a) of such code.

17          “(F) TRIBAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.—  
 18          The term ‘Tribal College or University’ has the  
 19          meaning given such term in section 316 of the  
 20          Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
 21          1059c).”.

○