

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

U.S. Senate Votes to Strike Moratorium on AI Regulation

The One Big Beautiful Bill budget legislation that cleared the U.S. Senate Tuesday no longer includes the moratorium on state-level AI regulatory efforts, after a bipartisan vote to amend the bill by removing the provision.

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The U.S. Senate has now passed the One Big, Beautiful Bill budget reconciliation act — but without the provision banning state-level AI regulation.

The [controversial](#) moratorium it originally included faced [bipartisan opposition](#) for, critics argued, infringing on [states' rights to enforce policies](#) that protect residents. The bill, when passed, would have banned [state and local governments](#) from enforcing the many A.

regulations [already in place and those forthcoming](#) — for a period of 10 years.

The AI provision was [removed](#) early Tuesday following a 99-1 Senate vote. This action was the result of a bipartisan amendment introduced Monday night by U.S. Sens. Marsha Blackburn and Maria Cantwell, to strike the provision. The act now returns to the U.S. House of Representatives for consideration.

Some senators had attempted to save the provision by compromising on its aspects, shortening the ban from 10 to five years and attempting to exempt laws addressing things like children's online safety — although experts warned the language was not sufficient to achieve the latter. On Monday night, Blackburn withdrew her support for a compromise previously reached with Sen. Ted Cruz, arguing in a [statement](#) that without federal protections in place, "the current language is not acceptable to those who need these protections the most."

Following the vote to remove the AI moratorium, Cantwell said in a [statement](#) that senators "came together tonight to say that we can't just run over good state consumer protection laws."

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders also [praised](#) the amendment to strike the provision. Sanders had previously led a group of 17 Republican governors in sending a letter to the Senate majority leader and the speaker of the House of Representatives, calling for removing the AI regulatory moratorium provision entirely.

"As Republican Governors, we support the One, Big, Beautiful Bill and President Trump's vision of American AI dominance, but we cannot support a provision that takes away states' powers to protect our citizens," the [letter](#) stated.

Voters also opposed the provision. A [study](#) from the Institute for Family Studies found that voters opposed this AI regulatory moratorium by a margin of 3 to 1.

The decision to strike this provision entirely from the budget bill met calls for its removal from technology policy and safety groups like The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' Center for Civil Rights and Technology and Common Sense Media. In a [statement](#), the latter organization said the U.S. Senate "did the right thing today" by removing the provision.

Matthew Ferraro served as the former senior counselor for cybersecurity and emerging technology to the U.S. secretary of Homeland Security. Ferraro, now a partner with Crowell and Moring LLP, told *Government Technology* via email that the way the provision was written as of Saturday would “likely create legal and compliance uncertainties for a range of state laws that attempt to address what the state views as the harms of AI.”

Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Max Tegmark is the president of the Future of Life Institute, a nonprofit focused on reducing extreme risks posed by technology. He commended the U.S. Senate’s rejection of “this Big Tech power grab” in a statement, underlining the bipartisan opposition to unregulated private-sector AI advances.

“Until Congress institutes robust safety guardrails for this increasingly powerful technology, federal preemption is unacceptable,” Tegmark said via email.

Americans for Responsible Innovation, a tech policy advocacy group, celebrated the provision’s removal in a [post](#) on X, thanking those who spoke out against it, including children’s advocates, labor groups and voters.

The AI moratorium’s proponents [had argued that it would](#) prevent states from creating a patchwork of rules on the technology that could hinder innovation — although other experts argued that in the [absence of comprehensive federal AI policy](#), [state-level AI policy adds clarity](#) to the “rules of the road.”

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