

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on “AI in Manufacturing: Securing American Leadership in Manufacturing and the Next Generation of Technologies”

February 12, 2025

I want to thank the witnesses for taking the time to testify on this wintry morning, but to the Republican Majority, I express extreme frustration that we are NOT addressing the fact that the Trump Administration has given corrupt billionaire Elon Musk, and his young anonymous henchmen unfettered access to government systems containing vast amounts of incredibly sensitive personal data about all Americans.

Musk and his team have access to all the data at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. That means they can access, and may be able to delete, modify, and transfer for their own corrupt purposes detailed health care information about tens of millions of Americans, including virtually all of our nation’s seniors.

They also have access to Treasury Department data that includes Social Security numbers, tax returns, payment information, all tied to names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

For decades we have had strong privacy and data protection laws in place that govern access to these government records to protect Americans’ privacy and the security of their personal information. With the full support of President Trump and House Republicans, Musk and his minions have ignored those protections, and civil servants attempting to protect Americans’ data from Musk’s unauthorized access have been fired.

If a foreign adversary or a domestic hacking group got access to any one of these government systems containing Americans’ sensitive personal information, we would consider it a major data breach, a privacy disaster, and a consequential national security incident.

State Attorneys General, public interest organizations, and the courts are doing their part to put a stop to the Trump Administration’s decision to hand over Americans’ most sensitive data to the richest man in the world and his cronies.

But Congress and this Subcommittee, in particular, should be using all of the tools at our disposal to protect Americans’ privacy. Unfortunately, instead of expressing outrage, holding hearings, and demanding accountability for Musk stealing Americans’ personal information, my Republican colleagues have chosen silence.

I urge my Republican colleagues to raise their voices to protect Americans’ personal health and financial data, and all of the other sensitive personal data that is now in the hands of Elon Musk and his henchmen.

Now turning to today's hearing, a strong and technologically advanced manufacturing base creates a healthy economy that uplifts hardworking, middle-class Americans, lowers the cost of American-made goods, bolsters our national security, and promotes global leadership.

And yet, in just the first few weeks of the Trump Administration, Republicans have turned their back on American families by attempting to illegally steal resources being put to work to grow and modernize the manufacturing sector.

The CHIPS and Science Act made a transformative \$52 billion investment to develop the advanced infrastructure and workforce needed to build critical semiconductors here in America. This will reduce the cost of American-made semiconductors and end our dangerous dependence on foreign manufacturers.

The Inflation Reduction Act recharged our domestic energy sector by providing \$369 billion to lower energy bills for American families and grow our economy so we can lead the global clean energy transition.

Republicans say they want to foster innovation, beat China, support American workers, and lower costs. Yet, they are choosing to look the other way as President Trump steals money from the American people, businesses, and communities.

American companies are being put at a disadvantage by President Trump's constant chaos. It is simply not realistic to expect American manufacturers, especially small and medium sized companies, to confidently make investments in their future when they are at risk of having to confront a senseless trade war or having federal funding they rely on illegally stripped away.

This is not a recipe for success. If Republicans are actually interested to securing American leadership in manufacturing and the next generation of technologies, they should work with us to defend the programs that are bolstering American manufacturing and the dedicated civil servants who work tirelessly to implement them. It is time for Republicans to stand up to the senseless Trump chaos that threatens American workers, small businesses, and our economy.

Thank you and I yield back.