

A woman and a man are standing in a server room, looking at a laptop. The woman is on the left, wearing glasses and a light blue patterned blazer. The man is on the right, wearing glasses and a light blue button-down shirt. They are both looking at the laptop screen. The background shows rows of server racks with blue lighting.

/edge

AMERICAN EDGE PROJECT

American Edge Project

2023 Toolkit

On Protecting America's Technological Edge

Learn more:
[Americanedgeproject.org](https://www.americanedgeproject.org)



AmericanEdgeProject



AmericanEdge

Dear Members of Congress,

On behalf of the American Edge Project (AEP), a coalition dedicated to the proposition that American technology and innovation are an essential part of the United States' economic health, national security, and individual freedoms, congratulations on being elected to the 118th Congress and representing your constituents. For years, American technology and innovation have protected Americans, while spreading our democratic values of freedom and expression, improving lives, and supporting America's economy and businesses, particularly small ones. That's why we are eager to work with you to strengthen American technology and secure America's position as a global leader in innovation.

The United States has led the world in technological innovation; however, as we look to the future, our leadership in this critical space is no longer guaranteed. We saw what short-sighted policies that handed our manufacturing edge over to China resulted in – loss of jobs, damage to economic growth, and a stronger adversary. Unfortunately, the same story is unfolding with U.S. technology.

Washington is pursuing anti-innovation legislation targeted at U.S. technology that would sap our innovative edge and threaten our economic and national security. Rather than undermining the foundation that has enabled America to thrive and be the envy of the world, we need to make it stronger.

China, a strong geopolitical adversary, is actively working to supplant the United States as a global tech leader. One organization [found](#) that in less than 10 years, China will be the world's largest research and development spender, leading the way in the development of critical national security technologies, such as 5/6G, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. Another organization [found](#) that “China possesses the might, talent, and ambition to surpass the United States as the world's leader in AI in the next decade.”

Faced with threats from foreign competitors, anti-innovation legislation currently being considered by Congress will undermine the development of domestic technology and jeopardize America's ability to compete with China in the coming years and decades. National security leaders, including James Clapper, former director of national intelligence, Jane Harman, former U.S. representative and ranking member of the U.S. House Intelligence Committee, and Leon Panetta, former secretary of defense and director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), have even expressed their concerns with anti-innovation legislation in an [open letter](#) to Congress.

By building and exporting U.S. technology, our economy and businesses are strengthened. Global access to technology developed by U.S. companies, with their practices and values shaped by Western norms, enhance U.S. national security. However, the economic impact of anti-innovation legislation could [cost](#) the U.S. economy up to \$319 billion.

It matters which country builds the future. U.S. tech companies have a global reach that helps advance Western values of an open and accessible internet. China's tech companies have fundamentally different values and are tightly intertwined with the Communist government's view of a closed, censored internet. The stakes are high, and we need to get this one right. Authoritarian values are not the principles we want leading the world and developing future technologies.

Rooted in investments, innovation, protecting Americans, and advancing democracy, Congress should look to make smart policy solutions that captures and maximizes American exceptionalism and secures domestic global technological leadership.

The importance of U.S. technology and the impact American innovation has had not only on our country but worldwide, cannot be understated. The stakes are high, we must strengthen American technology and innovation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D Kelly", is displayed on a light blue background.

Doug Kelly
CEO, American Edge Project

About the American Edge Project

Who We Are

The American Edge Project is a coalition dedicated to the proposition that American innovators are an essential part of U.S. economic health, national security, and individual freedoms.

The coalition and its members tell the story about the positive impact technology and innovation have on America's economy and businesses, particularly small ones, and how they enhance freedom of expression and our nation's overall security.

Our Pillars

Economy

America's innovators support millions of jobs across the country. They benefit businesses and organizations of all sizes by bringing their products to a broad consumer base around the world. Preserving an open and accessible internet is a critical component of conveying innovative ideas, building new organizations, inventing new goods and services, growing new businesses, reaching new customers, and developing new sectors.

National Security

As a global leader in innovation, the United States has strengthened its ability to protect its citizens, defend its allies, articulate our principles of freedom, expression and association, and encourage developing democracies. Policies that forfeit our competitive edge to foreign adversaries – particularly those that are state-owned or directed – put the safety, privacy, and liberty of free people and governments at risk.

Open & Accessible Internet

American innovators underpin an internet that is open, accessible, and welcoming of free expression. Not everyone around the world experiences those qualities. Some countries – with fundamentally different values – believe in a closed, censored internet, and use it to arrest and imprison citizens for political, social, or religious speech online.

Importance of Maintaining America's Edge

Anti-innovation legislation could handcuff U.S. tech innovation and lead to unintended consequences that would harm our national and economic security. That is why it is vital U.S. policymakers look to smart policy solutions that strengthen America's ability to innovate, protect our national security, and promote a democratic and open internet. It matters which country builds the future. The stakes are high.

By the Numbers: Impact of the Technology Industry on the U.S. Economy

8,679,198

Tech jobs in 2021.

4.8%

Growth in the overall digital economy between 2012 and 2020.

\$1.8 Trillion

Direct economic impact.

76%

Of small businesses relied on digital tools to a greater degree to run their business following the pandemic.

\$94,058

Median tech wage in the U.S.

125%

Higher than the median national wage.

85%

Of small enterprises use at least one major digital platform to connect with customers.

25,500

New tech businesses created in 2021.

Negative Impact of Anti-Innovation Bills

Technology supports a robust and thriving economy, but misguided anti-innovation legislation in Congress could undermine America's domestic tech sector, harming our economic and national security. If the anti-innovation bills are passed it would result in the following.

\$109 Billion

Estimated [cost](#) to public sector workers' pension plans.

\$319 Billion

Estimated [cost](#) to the economy.

\$500 Billion

[Loss in sales](#) that small and medium-sized retail businesses ("SMB Sellers") would sustain in roughly the first five years after the passage of anti-innovation legislation.

5.2% loss of sales

Anti-innovation legislation would informally amount to a "[regulatory tax](#)" of 5.2% on SMB Sellers (costing an average of \$1,712 per SMB Seller per month).



Americans Want Congress to Focus on Key Priorities, Not Anti-Innovation Bills

Voters rate regulating U.S. tech companies as a comparatively low priority (51% priority), below all others tested. Instead, Americans want their representatives to focus on the following priorities.

88%

Inflation and cost of living

86%

Protecting America's national security

85%

Jobs and the economy

83%

Lowering gas prices

82%

Health care



Read the full poll here.

87%

Are concerned that restricting American tech companies from developing innovative new products could make the United States less economically competitive.

84%

Are concerned that American small businesses that rely on tech platforms to reach consumers could be hurt because they could be forced to spend more money to attract customers.

84%

Are concerned that American small businesses could have to pay more for online advertising, which could make it more expensive for them to operate their business and get new customers.



Policy Pillars

/edge

AMERICAN EDGE PROJECT

Policy Pillar: Economy

Innovation is the lifeblood of America's economy and the underpinning of our national prosperity and security. For generations, the United States has led the world in pioneering innovative technologies that create opportunity, improve quality of life, and foster economic growth and prosperity. However, America's global leadership in this critical space is being challenged by foreign adversaries, namely China. Nations around the globe are implementing campaigns aimed at overtaking America in producing the innovative technologies of tomorrow.

At the same time - right here in America - many of our elected officials in Congress are pursuing shortsighted policies that threaten to undermine our technological edge and weaken the ability of our businesses and creators to compete on the world stage.

Economic Advisory Board



Saxby Chambliss
Former U.S. Senator (R-GA)

Saxby Chambliss served in the U.S. Senate for two terms and served as vice chair of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.



Kent Conrad
Former U.S. Senator (D-ND)

Kent Conrad was a former U.S. Senator who represented North Dakota from 1992 to 2013. He served as Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.



Learn More

Read our economic policy agenda

"An Economic Policy Agenda To Accelerate Innovation" [here](#).

Read our white paper

"Sharpening The Edge: The State Of The Digital Innovation Economy" [here](#).

Policy Pillar: National Security

As a global leader in innovation, the United States has strengthened its ability to protect its citizens, defend its allies, articulate our principles of freedom, expression and association, and encourage developing democracies. Policies that forfeit our competitive edge to foreign entities – particularly those that are state-owned or directed – put the safety, privacy, and liberty of free people and governments at risk.

Despite stark warnings from national security leaders, some in Congress are pursuing anti-innovation legislation that targets our domestic technology sector – a key player in our national security and cyber defense strategy. The U.S. technology sector is instrumental in the effort to advance our national security capabilities and detect and deter future cyber threats and uphold secure networks and cyber protections.

National Security Advisory Board



Frances Townsend

Former White House Counterterrorism and Homeland Security Advisor

Frances Townsend previously served as Chair of the Homeland Security Council and one of President George W. Bush's top advisors.



Michael J. Morell

Former Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

Morell served as Deputy Director of the CIA for over three years. Michael also served twice as Acting Director.



General Joseph F. Dunford Jr.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Joe Dunford served as the 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



Learn More

Read our national security policy framework [here](#).

Read our white paper

in partnership with the Lexington Institute "U.S. National Security Requires A Robust, Innovative Tech Sector" [here](#).

Policy Pillar: Open & Accessible Internet

American innovators underpin an internet that is open, accessible, and welcoming of free expression. Not everyone around the world experiences those qualities. Some countries – with fundamentally different values – believe in a closed, censored internet, and use it to arrest and imprison citizens for political, social, or religious speech online.

American technology protects our citizens, defends our allies, and articulates our principles of freedom, expression, and association, while empowering millions of citizens around the world to make their voices heard.

To maintain America’s edge, we need a smart policy approach that doesn’t weaken companies that share American values as they compete in the global marketplace. As policymakers consider the rules and laws that govern innovators, we urge them to protect American values of openness, accessibility, and freedom of expression as essential contributors to America’s competitive advantage.

Open & Accessible Internet Advisory Board



Congressman Greg Walden
Former U.S. Congressman (R-OR)

Former Chair of the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Learn More

Read op-eds by AEP’s advisors

“Concerning Report Spotlights Need To Protect An Open Internet” [here](#).

“Open, Accessible Internet Is A Must For All Americans” [here](#).

A person is seen from behind, sitting at a desk in a dark room illuminated by the blue glow of multiple computer monitors. The person's hands are on a keyboard. The background shows more monitors and some hanging cables. A red diagonal stripe is visible in the top left corner.

The Growing Threat of Adversaries

/edge

AMERICAN EDGE PROJECT

Competition with China

The United States is in a high-stakes race with China for global tech leadership. China now constitutes America's greatest geopolitical rival in a number of different areas including economically, militarily, technologically, and even ideologically.

American tech companies remain preeminent on the global stage and continue to be a driving force behind important breakthroughs in emerging technology, but China is quickly catching up and is determined to undermine the United States' technological dominance.

As Beijing works toward its China Standards 2035 strategy to supplant the United States as a global technological leader and expand its influence and gain dominance over the technology sector, it matters which country builds the technologies and sets the tech standards for the future. The internet can be led by the United States, which values a free and open internet, or by authoritarian regimes such as China, which uses technology to surveil and control its citizens.

If China dominates critical advanced technologies, it can impose its own totalitarian values on the way the world communicates, operates, and governs itself, helping advance a “digital authoritarianism” of ubiquitous surveillance and control over the flow of information that stifles the free flow of ideas.

To compete with this rising threat, Washington should support U.S. technology and ensure that new emerging technologies, such as data surveillance, artificial intelligence, and patent reform, come from the United States. If not, and we cede our leadership and hand the keys to the internet to Chinese President Xi Jinping, we risk jeopardizing our economic and national security as well as democratic freedoms across the globe.

Learn More

Read the Atlantic Council's report

in partnership with AEP “Standardizing The Future: How Can The United States Navigate The Geopolitics Of International Technology Standards?” [here](#).

Read the Lexington Institute report

in partnership with AEP “The New Arsenal Of Democracy: The U.S. Commercial High-Tech Industry's Role In Countering The China Threat” [here](#).

Read AEP's poll

“U.S. And European Voters Share View That China And Russia Are Global Economic And Security” [here](#).

Quick Facts: The Growing Threat of China



[China](#) believes it will “own America” by the year 2035.



Nine of the top 20 technology companies are now based in China rather than the United States, according to [Boston Consulting Group’s Henderson Institute](#).



The U.S. Defense Department could “fall behind” if the private technology sector were to be weakened, according to the [Council on Foreign Relations \(CFR\)](#).



CFR also [found](#) that foreign nations are spending more on developing new technologies generally and “after 2030 [China] will likely be the world’s largest spender on research and development.”



China “has displaced the United States as the world’s top high-tech manufacturer,” and, “has become a serious competitor in the foundational technologies of the 21st century: artificial intelligence (AI), 5G, quantum information science (QIS), semiconductors, biotechnology, and green energy,” according to [Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs](#).



The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence [assessed](#) that “China possesses the might, talent, and ambition to surpass the United States as the world’s leader in AI in the next decade.”



In the 2022 Freedom of the Net [report](#), China ranks as the worst environment for internet freedom for the eighth year in a row.



China’s theft of U.S. intellectual property has cost Americans [\\$500 billion](#) a year. The U.S. Director of National Intelligence said, “[China presents a prolific and effective cyber-espionage threat, possesses substantial cyber-attack capabilities, and presents a growing influence threat.](#)”



Losing the tech race to China would reduce America’s gross domestic product (GDP), slow job growth, yield fewer high-paying jobs, and result in fewer opportunities for international trade, according to the [Lexington Institute](#).

Americans Are Concerned

[American Edge Project polling](#) shows that an overwhelming majority of voters agree that China and Russia’s growing technological influence is a threat to their country’s national security (76% in U.S., 72% in Europe) and economy (76% in U.S., 70% in Europe).

Western voters are also [alarmed](#) by the prospect of “foreign countries gaining a technological advantage over the U.S. and Europe” (86% concern in the U.S., 80% in Europe).

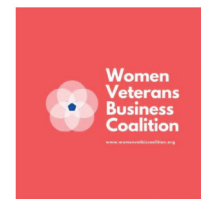
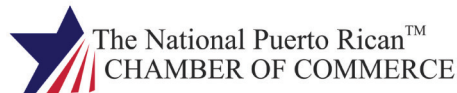


Who We Are

/edge

AMERICAN EDGE PROJECT

Our Members



Our Leadership

CEO



Doug Kelly

CEO of American Edge Project

Kelly serves as the CEO and main spokesperson for the American Edge Project.

Board Members



Bradley A. Smith

Chairman and Founder, Institute for Free Speech

Smith previously served as a Commissioner on the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and was elected as Vice Chairman of the Commission in 2003 and Chairman of the Commission in 2004.



Chris P. Carney

Former Member of Congress (D-PA)

Carney served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, and as chairman of the Management, Investigations, and Oversight Subcommittee.



Susana Martinez

Former Governor (R-NM)

Martinez was the first female Governor of New Mexico and the first Hispanic female governor in the history of the United States.

What They Are Saying



Senator John Cornyn (R-TX):

“I do have concerns about the impact of this bill on American businesses’ ability to compete in a global economy. And that it will also... uh, create potential harmful impacts on our national security. I think there are also questions about cyber security and data privacy that have not been answered.”

Senator Chris Coons (D-DE):

“I have significant concerns, um, to balance about whether or not this bill achieves the right balance between the costs and inefficiencies of litigation and compliance and potentially unintended negative consequences on the competitiveness globally of our digital democracy principles on the world stage and whether or not we’re achieving enough progress in terms of combating anti-competitive behavior on the other...I am not yet persuaded the legislation would most efficiently address anti-competitive behavior while improving the state of play for consumers and their privacy and data security. Um, I have remaining concerns about privacy and security... about our global competitiveness and about services that are widely popular with consumers and my constituents.”

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA):

“The bill causes some very significant security concerns...But this bill would actually prevent companies, like Apple, from taking steps to ensure that an application is safe before you download it from your phone. This makes no sense. We’re requiring companies to take down protections that are in place today and instead allow hackers and those looking to steal personal data to access the devices. I’m told that federal agencies have concerns about these provisions, but this committee has not had the benefit of their input.”

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT):

“I think the bill makes it too difficult for online platforms to adequately protect consumers’ privacy. The bill creates a bar that’s far too high for platforms to protect privacy without worrying about being penalized, which I... I worry it could lead to a race to the bottom on America’s privacy...I also want to make sure we’re not inadvertently harming our national security.”

Former New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez (R-NM):

“Technological innovation is the backbone of America’s economy. For more than 80 years, the United States has led the world in pioneering the breakthrough technology that has improved quality of life, created opportunity and fostered economic growth and prosperity. However, the future of American leadership in innovation and technological development is now being called into question. Foreign nations are working hard to supplant us as the world’s most innovative economy. We cannot allow that to happen.”

Former Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA):

“America’s tech innovators are driving economic growth and creating jobs in every corner of the country. Technology is not just a sector of our economy, it is a key foundation of our national economic growth and prosperity. If America is to harness the opportunity of the 21st century, we must strengthen our capacity to innovate and pioneer the breakthrough technologies of tomorrow.”

Former Senator Kent Conrad (R-ND):

“Technology is the engine of America’s economy. Millions of jobs and countless businesses across this country rely on the innovative services, products and tools created by our technology companies. We can’t afford to stand idly by as global technological leadership could pass from the United States to one of our strategic competitors. We need a whole-of-government strategy for supporting and strengthening American innovation and technology. That is exactly what this policy agenda provides.”

Former Deputy Director and Acting Director Morell:

“As acting director of the CIA, I saw first-hand the vital role American technology plays in keeping our nation safe and secure. However, we must not take our leadership for granted. Across the world, our adversaries – namely China and Russia – are working hard to surpass the United States in developing the cutting-edge technologies of tomorrow.”

General Joseph Dunford:

“America is fortunate to be home to the most innovative and successful tech sector in the world. Our technology companies strengthen national security, deter threats from abroad, and play a crucial role driving economic growth and prosperity. While there is a genuine need for targeted regulation and policymaking, we can’t afford to have our policymakers adopt practices that unnecessarily hamper a U.S. industry so critical to American prosperity and security.”

Former U.S. Representative Greg Walden (R-OR):

“America has an unrivaled commitment to freedom of expression. It’s up to each of us to protect it and export it around the world. The maintenance of an open internet that welcomes free expression is as personal to me as it is pivotal to the interests of our country – particularly as ‘techno-autocracies’ with diametrically different values seek to spread their vision of a closed, censored internet.”

Former Federal Election Commission Chairman Bradley A. Smith:

“An open and free internet is seen as central to ensuring freedom and individual rights, and as a necessary part of a healthy democracy. The alternative is stark. Around the world, authoritarian regimes with strict internet restrictions on speech underscore the severity of what’s at stake in the broader battle between censorship and free expression online.”

Former U.S. Representative Chris Carney (D-PA):

“As countries continue to engage in the theft of American intellectual property—and as experts continue to warn about how foreign actors are attempting to interfere in our institutions—we must be sure that we do not lose the edge that U.S.-based technology companies provide to our national security.”

Former White House Counterterrorism Advisor Frances Townsend:

“In the competition between ‘techno-democracies’ like the United States, EU, and UK versus ‘techno-autocracies’ like Russia and China, it’s vital that America work alongside our transatlantic partners to defend our interests and advance our values. If we don’t, we risk ceding our technological leadership to countries with diametrically different values.”



In The Media

Read some of the latest op-eds from the American Edge Project.



Read an op-ed by AEP’s economic advisors “Antitrust Law Should Continue To Prioritize Consumers Over Corporations” [here](#).



Read an op-ed by AEP’s board and advisors “How To Protect America’s Innovative Edge Against Foreign Threats” [here](#).



Read an op-ed by AEP’s national security advisors “The Trade And Tech Council Is A Way To Unify Against China - Unless Europe Derails It” [here](#).



Read an op-ed by AEP’s values advisors “Olympic Competition For Ideas” [here](#).



Read an op-ed by Frances Townsend “Why America Should Not Adopt Europe’s Model For Tech Regulation” [here](#).



Read an op-ed by Michael Morell “This Obscure Election Will Decide The Fate Of The Open Internet” [here](#).