

THE TIPPING POINT IS HERE: NINE-IN-TEN U.S. POLICY INSIDERS SAY AI MUST BE REGULATED — AND GOVERNMENTS ARE FALLING SHORT



New Povaddo survey of 301 U.S. and European public policy experts reveals widespread alarm over AI governance gaps, labor market disruption, and the risk of an AI-driven misinformation crisis

In the U.S., four-in-ten policy insiders say AI poses an existential threat to humanity

ST. LOUIS, Missouri (May 1, 2026) – A newly released [survey](#) from Povaddo finds that public policy experts across the United States and Europe—the lawmakers, staffers, advocates, and analysts who help shape the rules governing society—agree that governments are failing to keep pace with the rise of AI. These findings from 301 individuals who help shape, influence, and analyze public policy reveal concern over AI’s impact on the labor market, democracy, and public safety, alongside near-universal agreement that government regulation of AI must be increased.

In an era when political consensus is elusive, this survey finds widespread agreement within the policy communities on both sides of the Atlantic that government regulation of AI should be increased. Three-in-five (61%) public policy experts say governments around the world are falling short in addressing the negative impacts of AI. The call for action is especially pronounced in the United States, where nine-in-ten (92%) public policy experts support stronger regulation compared to seven-in-ten (70%) in Europe.

The survey also reveals notable transatlantic differences in how public policy experts view AI’s societal impact. U.S. public policy experts express greater unease overall, particularly regarding the labor market. Over half (57%) believe AI is currently hurting the labor market in their country, compared to 34% of their European counterparts. U.S. public policy experts are also more likely to say AI poses a greater threat to jobs than immigration (63% versus 47% in Europe). Though public policy experts in both regions agree an AI-driven misinformation crisis is likely to happen within the next one to two years (87% in the U.S. versus 82% in Europe), those in the U.S. are more likely to believe misinformation created or spread by AI will affect national elections and voting outcomes as well as public health information.

These specific concerns are creating broader existential concerns. Four-in-ten U.S. public policy experts (41%) believe AI poses an existential threat to humanity, significantly more than the 29% of European public policy experts who share this view. U.S. public policy experts are also more likely than their European counterparts to believe that advances in AI will harm global security and stability. Despite geographic differences, these findings suggest that alarm about AI is moving into the mainstream of the policy world on both sides of the Atlantic.

The findings come at a moment of growing bipartisan concern in Washington. Senator Josh Hawley, one of the leading Republican voices calling for AI accountability, has introduced multiple pieces of bipartisan legislation with Democratic Senators Richard Blumenthal and Mark Warner aimed at protecting workers and children from AI-related harms and making the case that Congress has “a moral imperative to make sure that AI is actually good for people.” Across the Atlantic, the introduction of the EU’s landmark AI Act — the world’s first comprehensive AI regulatory framework — may help explain why European public policy experts express comparatively lower levels of concern across several survey questions.

“What makes these findings so significant is who is saying it,” said [William Stewart](#), President and Founder of Povaddo. “These are the practitioners who work inside the policy process every day, spanning every corner of the policy world from defense to healthcare to finance, not activists or everyday citizens. These findings foreshadow real action. The current path of governments accelerating AI deployment while falling short on governance is not sustainable, and the people who know that best are the ones in this survey. You cannot have nine-in-ten policy insiders demanding more regulation and four-in-ten calling AI an existential threat without that eventually moving the needle in Washington and Brussels in terms of legislative or regulatory action.”

Visit the “[Published Studies](#)” section of Povaddo’s website for a high-level summary of select key findings.

The complete 38-page report is available for \$500 and includes detailed survey results for more than 35 questions, including:

- Trust in specific technology companies to regulate and deploy AI responsibly, including Microsoft, Apple, Google, OpenAI, Nvidia, xAI, and Meta
- Trust in specific governments to regulate and deploy AI responsibly, including the U.S., EU, Japan, South Korea, India, China, and Israel
- Perceptions of current U.S. and EU regulatory approaches to AI, including the EU's Apply AI Strategy
- Current and anticipated societal impact of AI on the economy, labor market, democracy, public health, and the environment
- Opinions on data centers, including their economic benefits, community risks, and regulatory oversight
- AI's crisis potential, including misinformation, labor displacement, cybersecurity, and existential risk

Members of the media may request complimentary access to the full report by contacting info@povaddo.com.

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About This Survey: Conducted and funded by Povaddo as part of the firm’s insights and intelligence platform, this online survey was fielded January 6-18, 2026 among n=151 public policy experts in the U.S. and n=150 public policy experts in the EU. Public policy experts are defined as individuals who help shape, influence, and/or analyze public policy as part of their daily job. Respondents for this survey were sourced from the [Povaddo Panel](#), Povaddo’s purpose-built research panel of more than 10,000 public policy and business leaders worldwide.

About Povaddo: With offices in the U.S. and South Africa, Povaddo specializes in public opinion and policy elite research. Founded in 2009, the firm is recognized as a trusted advisor to top-tier organizations that are seeking to navigate complex issues management, strategic communications, corporate reputation, and business transformation challenges. For more information, please visit www.povaddo.com.

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