

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2026

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION
JOINT ECONOMIC
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE

Mr. Sean Cairncross
National Cyber Director
716 Jackson Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Mr. Michael Kratsios
Director of Science and Technology Policy
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Director Cairncross and Director Kratsios,

I write regarding reports that the Center for AI Standards and Innovation (CAISI) has been directed to cease the publication of its findings from testing and evaluating frontier AI models.¹ This comes on the heels of President Trump's June 2, 2026, Executive Order (EO) on "Promoting Advanced Artificial Intelligence Innovation and Security."² The EO notably directs the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), and the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to "develop and maintain a classified benchmarking process" that assess the cyber capability of advanced AI models.³

The EO further tasked those agencies and agency components with determining the threshold at which an AI model should be classified as a "covered frontier model" and empowered the NSA director to decide when the sharing of such assessments with AI developers and researchers is appropriate.⁴

The United States continues to benefit from a healthy and competitive ecosystem of AI researchers and benchmarking organizations. Leading AI labs consistently partner with such groups to evaluate capabilities and probe for potential vulnerabilities. Making these findings open and available benefits future researchers and nurtures the entire research ecosystem. While CAISI is still a relatively new component of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), it is at the center of the federal government's efforts to help incubate a robust and rich AI research and evaluation environment. By partnering with the key leading AI labs, NIST's team of experts have established themselves a trusted resource, for America's top AI innovators.

As the U.S. continues our fight to maintain American leadership in AI, CAISI has also played a leading role in highlighting, in a public fashion, the relative capability of leading Chinese AI models compared to U.S. offerings.⁵ Particularly, CAISI has published research on significant security vulnerabilities found

¹ Ramkumar, Amrith. "White House Reins In AI-Testing Unit as National-Security Concerns Grow." The Wall Street Journal, 9 June 2026, www.wsj.com/politics/policy/white-house-reins-in-ai-testing-unit-as-national-security-concerns-grow-8bd33fbb.

² Executive Order 14409, 'Promoting Advanced Artificial Intelligence Innovation and Security' (June 2, 2026). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/06/promoting-advanced-artificial-intelligence-innovation-and-security/>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ CAISI Evaluation of DeepSeek V4 Pro." National Institute of Standards and Technology, 1 May 2026, www.nist.gov/news-events/news/2026/05/caisi-evaluation-deepseek-v4-pro.

within DeepSeek open-source models so AI researchers, developers, and businesses seeking to incorporate AI can avoid unsafe Chinese platforms.⁶

I agree with the Administration's efforts to secure critical infrastructure and information systems. The NSA's world-class cybersecurity expertise and resources are critical in addressing the potential significant national security vulnerabilities and implications of leading models. We can't ignore the risk of exfiltration of technology by our adversaries or how targeted, malicious prompt injections or data poisoning attempts by state actors could disrupt American technology infrastructure.

CAISI's mission of facilitating collaborative research fosters and expands the capacity of non-governmental AI research organizations and AI companies to monitor and understand frontier AI developments. By allowing NSA and CAISI to work together, the Administration can help position AI innovators in the private sector more effectively, especially as AI capabilities improve rapidly.

To continue to build on the groundbreaking innovation of America's AI industry, I request that you continue to allow CAISI to perform its important mission in conjunction with the AI missions of other components of the government and, to the extent possible, allow its research to be published. More high-quality research conducted by CAISI's informed experts deepens America's AI competitive ecosystem for model and benchmark developers. Leveraging the strength of both America's public and private sector capacity to evaluate, monitor, and understand frontier AI development will only become more critical as industries in every sector of our economy continue to embrace AI technology.

Sincerely,



Ted Budd
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Scott Bessent,
Secretary of the Treasury

The Honorable Howard Lutnick,
Secretary of Commerce

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin,
Secretary of Homeland Security

The Honorable Susan Wiles,
White House Chief of Staff

General Joshua M. Rudd
Director of the National Security Agency

⁶ CAISI Evaluation of DeepSeek AI Models Finds Shortcomings and Risks." National Institute of Standards and Technology, 30 Sept. 2025, www.nist.gov/news-events/news/2025/09/caisi-evaluation-deepseek-ai-models-finds-shortcomings-and-risks.