

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich
Highlights FY20 National Defense Authorization Act
Artificial Intelligence

Armed Forces Digital Advantage Act

The Senate Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment by Senator Heinrich that incorporated legislation introduced on May 15, 2019, the Armed Forces Digital Advantage Act (S. 1471), which emphasizes digital engineering as a core competency of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and establishes a career track for computer scientists in the military. This effort would modernize the DoD workforce by adding a recruitment focus and establishing military career tracks for digital engineering that will provide incentives for service members to specialize in computer science and have accelerated promotion tracks. The language requires a Chief Digital Engineering Recruitment and Management Officer and a plan for each Service to establish new career tracks.

Transformational technologies including Artificial Intelligence, 5G telecommunications services, and cloud computing will present new opportunities and challenges for the Department of Defense. As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly prioritized, computer coding skills should be treated similarly to mission-critical foreign language skills. In addition to building a younger generation of AI experts, this Act creates an avenue for educating mid-to-senior level leaders and policy makers about the importance of data. With mid-to-senior level leadership trained in AI and an appreciation for how data underlies AI, we have every opportunity to get ahead.

Artificial Intelligence Commercial Solutions

The Senate Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment by Senator Heinrich that secured \$7.5 million specifically for accelerating commercial AI solutions. The committee noted the importance of accelerating AI applications in support of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center's (JAIC) National Mission Initiatives, including disaster response and predictive maintenance. Heinrich's language supports the use of commercial AI solutions and urges the Defense Innovation Unit to coordinate with the JAIC to identify problem sets facing the Department and to seek commercial AI solutions.

U.S. Department of Defense Artificial Intelligence Investment Inventory

The Senate Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment by Senator Heinrich directing the Comptroller to brief the defense committees by September 1, 2019 on the total complement of artificial intelligence (AI) investments, to include PE and line numbers amounts with sufficient detail and description of those investments. Senator Heinrich is co-founder of the Senate Artificial Intelligence Caucus and believes it is important that the Department of Defense (DoD) have accurate insight to the nature and extent of investments in AI.

National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence – Extension of Authority

The Senate Armed Services Committee adopted an amendment by Senator Heinrich that extends the duration of the current Artificial Intelligence Commission in order to account for time lost due to the government shutdown.

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