January 25, 2024

The Honorable Jacquelyn Baginski, Chair
House Committee on Innovation, Internet, & Technology
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 7158 – Artificial Intelligence Accountability Act

Dear Chair Baginski and members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of TechNet to provide comments on HB 7158, which would establish a permanent commission to monitor and provide recommendations on the state's use of artificial intelligence.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over 4.2 million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

Proposed section 42-166-3 of the bill directs the Department of Administration to conduct an inventory of all systems that employ artificial intelligence in use by state agencies. This is an exercise that has been undertaken by our New England neighbors in Vermont and Connecticut. If the Committee intends to advance this legislation, TechNet recommends that the definition of "artificial intelligence" be amended to mirror the one used by the National Institute for Science and Technology (NIST). This will harmonize Rhode Island's statute with ongoing federal work streams and legislation in other states, while also helping to avoid the experience of Vermont, whose less precise definition of AI pulled into focus more basic systems like spam filters and smart spreadsheets.

We also ask that the Committee consider including industry voices on the commission, that the commission's report include a review of the potential for AI systems to improve constituent services and catalyze workforce and economic

development, and that the proposed impact assessments be reviewed to ensure they do not negatively affect the state's ability to leverage the benefits of AI systems in the future.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Christopher Gilrein
Executive Director, Northeast
TechNet
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