



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DATA CENTER COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 13, 2026
Conference Center, Student Center, Minot State University
Minot, North Dakota

Representative Jonathan Warrey, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Jonathan Warrey, Mike Nathe, Anna S. Novak, Todd Porter, Mary Schneider*; Senators Jose L. Castaneda, Kyle Davison,* Janne Myrdal, Dean Rummel, Mike Wobbema; Citizen Members Tony Clark,* Mark R. Hagerott

Members absent: None

Others present: Senator Brad Bekkedahl and Representative LaurieBeth Hager, members of the Legislative Management

Doug Goehring, Department of Agriculture; Nick Phillips, Applied Digital; Cassidy Halseth, Bureau of Criminal Investigation; Tom Bussiere,* United States Air Force Global Strike Command; Anthony Aguirre,* Future of Life Institute; Michael Marinaccio,* Center for Responsible Technology; Nigel George, Minot State University

Victoria Christian, Legislative Council

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Nathe, seconded by Representative Porter, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the July 15, 2026, meeting be approved as distributed.

IMPACTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON CHILDREN

Ms. Victoria Christian, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented a memorandum entitled [Artificial Intelligence Impacts on Children - Sexual Exploitation and Chatbots](#).

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Christian noted North Dakota has stricter statutory age verification laws than the Texas Responsible Artificial Intelligence Governance Act, but North Dakota has lower penalties than Texas.

Mr. Levi Bachmeier, Superintendent of Public Instruction, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding regulating artificial intelligence (AI) education policies in schools. He noted:

- Active versus passive use of technology will be the defining test of whether AI aids or hinders education.
- Family and teacher partnerships will play a major role in regulating AI in education.
- Growing skepticism toward one-to-one technology deployment between schools and families suggests districts should regulate basic digital literacy practices for students who receive a device.
- AI companies may seek new ways to keep students engaged with the chatbot companions, making fundamental prohibitions and safeguards essential for children's well-being.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Bachmeier noted:

- The committee should regulate foundational protections for students and educators, but schools, teachers, and legislators must find a middle ground because banning and preventing exposure to AI may deny students important educational tools.
- Academic integrity is not a new issue for legislators, but the committee may want to investigate the psychological effects on school-aged children of cognitive offloading related to the use of AI.
- AI will not solve all of a school's problems; instead, digital literacy is a foundational part of students' academic experience.

Committee members requested the Legislative Council staff to prepare a bill draft addressing AI regulation in education.

Mr. Cassidy Halseth, Special Agent and Commander, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, Bureau of Criminal Investigation, presented information (Appendices [C](#) and [D](#)) regarding child exploitation crimes involving AI. He noted:

- In 2025, North Dakota received 2,698 cyber tips, the largest amount the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force has received in a year, and investigators are spending more time distinguishing between real images versus AI-generated child sexual abuse material.
- AI systems without effective safeguards may normalize inappropriate conversations and weaken healthy boundaries through repeated exposure and personalized responses.
- Keeping pace with new AI threats requires sustained investment in technology, training, investigation wellness, victim services, and public education.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Halseth noted:

- With no safeguards, AI can enable false allegations, forcing investigators to treat every claim as real until proven otherwise. Each month, investigators analyze roughly 60 to 70 terabytes of data.
- The federal REPORT Act and the federal Child Protection Act mandate reporting child exploitation but do not require proactive regulation.
- Each cyber tip is analyzed by an agent, with two in Minot, two in Bismarck, three in Fargo, and two at the Grand Forks offices.

COMMENTS BY INTERESTED PERSONS

The committee received information relating to the committee's study of AI and data centers from:

- Mr. Doug Goehring, Agriculture Commissioner, provided testimony ([Appendix E](#)) regarding data center energy use, land ownership, and AI regulation.
- Mr. Nick Phillips, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs and Real Estate Acquisitions, Applied Digital, provided testimony regarding community outreach and involvement.
- Mr. Greg Kasowski, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota, provided testimony regarding the impact of chatbots on children's safety mentally and physically.
- Mr. Chris Renner, Member, City of Beulah Planning and Zoning Board, provided testimony ([Appendix F](#)) regarding a proposed data center county ordinance, energy usage, water rights, and the possibility of misinformation presented on social media platforms.

CYBERSECURITY

General (Retired) Tom Bussiere, Former Commander, United States Air Force Global Strike Command, provided information regarding the national security implications of AI, data centers, and key considerations. He noted:

- North Dakota is home to the only military installation with two legs of the nuclear triad.

- Three areas of concern regarding AI and data centers and national security include threats to military and national installations, grid overload or sabotage, and supply chain vulnerability.
- His recommendations would be to implement a military buffer zone or setback mandate for data centers, preventing nondisclosure agreements with political subdivisions from complicating due diligence processes before contracts and public notices are issued, adopting ownership transparency laws regulating foreign-backed businesses, allowing broader jurisdiction for the Public Service Commission, and adopting a critical infrastructure foreign control law.

In response to questions from committee members, General Bussiere noted:

- Hosting a national security data center may help alleviate potential foreign influence risks.
- Older facilities experiencing supply chain issues is less of a concern as technology advances.
- Unregulated private companies present vulnerabilities without mandated transparency requirements.

RISKS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Dr. Anthony Aguirre, President and Chief Executive Officer, Future of Life Institute, provided information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding the risk of loss of human control over AI. He noted:

- AI systems' capabilities and willingness to complete complex tasks are growing.
- AI systems are neural networks represented by large sets of numbers that determine the output, which create a powerful predictive system, the output of which cannot always be predicted by humans.
- AI systems are transforming from passive response systems to goal-oriented predictive systems, making safety and oversight more complex as AI systems advance.

In response to a question from a committee member, Dr. Aguirre noted:

- Predeployment testing is the key regulation needed to protect children.
- There must be a prohibition on developing certain types of AI systems.

Mr. Michael Marinaccio, Executive Director, Center for Responsible Technology, provided information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding mental health, the cognitive decline of children, and the impact on society. He noted:

- In 2004, Facebook reached one million users; in 2006, momentum grew toward one-to-one computing; and in 2007, the smartphone emerged.
- Chatbots look for pattern recognition in trainable data. Chatbots do not think or reason.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Marinaccio noted:

- In Texas, courts recently allowed the App Store Accountability Act to take effect, demonstrating how First Amendment rights can be balanced with child protection.
- A school accreditation pilot program is being established to evaluate schools' use of technology and award schools using technology responsibly. The pilot program has 10 to 30 schools that will take the certification and receive feedback. The program aims to fully launch by the end of the year.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Daren Erisman, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, and Dr. Nigel George, Professor of Physics, Minot State University, provided information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding the impact of AI on students and adolescents. They noted:

- Over the past 2 years, Minot State University has taught an AI course sequence and delivered AI professional development to more than 150 K-12 teachers.

- AI systems may cause humans to question reality.
- There are safety tools called "wrappers," software embedded in AI systems allowing students to interact with AI with more safeguards in place. An example is Magic AI.

In response to questions from committee members, Dr. Erisman and Dr. George noted:

- Turning students into teachers of AI helps students develop an understanding of AI and gives students agency to become innovators.
- North Dakota should develop an AI curriculum, possibly forming a consortium of regional schools to work on an AI curriculum, giving K-12 teachers and higher education institutions a stake in the issue.

Mr. Jerry Rostad, Director for Special Projects, Valley City State University, noted the university is developing an online AI curriculum with the South East Education Cooperative for elementary and high school teachers.

No further business appearing, Chairman Warrey adjourned the meeting at 3:51 p.m.

Erin K. Dohm
Counsel

Kim Yang
Policy Analyst

ATTACH:9