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POLICY SPOTLIGHT

State AI Policy Principles

How State Policymakers Can Maximize the Benefits of AI and Address Its Challenges

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When Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, few could have foreseen how profoundly and quickly it would transform American society, from the electrification of buildings to the proliferation of electric motors. Today, society stands on the threshold of a similarly powerful technological revolution, this time powered by artificial intelligence (AI). Guiding AI's safe, swift, and seamless integration into daily life will be a central task of AI policymakers and civil society actors in the years to come.

Unfortunately, much of the government's focus on AI resembles what would have been an attempt to regulate light bulbs or hold electricity producers liable for how consumers used electric appliances. Here are four key principles that policymakers can consider in order to maximize the benefits of AI and address the challenges it presents:

1. Build State Agility
2. Promote Engineering-First Solutions
3. Center AI Diffusion
4. Prioritize Regulating Conduct, Not Models

State and local governments will play a key role in the AI revolution, just as they did in previous technological revolutions—for example, by developing road systems for automobiles and building the electric grid. To play this role effectively, policymakers should do the following:

- Update and harmonize existing law to counter AI risks and ensure regulatory clarity for residents and businesses,
- Create clear standards for government use of AI, and
- Lead the way in AI deployment by using AI to improve internal processes and operations.

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