

An Open Letter to Governor Gavin Newsom

Re:Executive Order N-6-26 issued by Governor Gavin Newsom

The Future of Human Work in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Savior of Humanity Through AI (SOHTAI)

Dear Governor Newsom,

First and foremost, I would like to commend your administration for recognizing that artificial intelligence is no longer a theoretical issue, but a rapidly emerging force already impacting California's workforce, economy, and social structure.

The executive order represents one of the first serious acknowledgments by a major government that AI-driven disruption is real, measurable, and potentially transformative to the lives of millions of working people. California deserves credit for confronting this issue earlier than most states.

The executive order correctly recognizes several important realities:

- Artificial intelligence may significantly disrupt labor markets and disproportionately impact workers.
- AI deployment is accelerating across virtually every major industry.
- Market incentives alone may not prioritize the public good.
- Workforce retraining and adaptation must be taken seriously.
- Workers and labor organizations deserve a voice in how these technologies are deployed.

These are meaningful and important steps forward.

At the same time, much of the executive order focuses on helping small businesses adopt AI technologies and remain competitive. Supporting small businesses is important. However, the current wave of large-scale workforce displacement is not principally being driven by local small businesses.

The real disruption is coming from some of the largest corporations in the world — companies with massive computing power, extraordinary market leverage, and strong financial incentives to reduce labor costs through automation and AI deployment. Google, Meta, Disney, Amazon, and other major technology and media companies are already restructuring significant portions of their workforce while aggressively investing in AI systems.

That concentration of technological power deserves careful attention.

Many of the technology leaders, investors, and AI architects driving this acceleration are brilliant innovators. But innovation alone does not automatically translate into social responsibility or long-term stewardship. Increasingly, a relatively small group of powerful technology executives and venture-backed AI companies are influencing decisions that may fundamentally reshape labor markets, creative industries, communication, education, and even democratic systems faster than public policy can realistically respond.

Senator Bernie Sanders and others have repeatedly voiced concerns that enormous technological and economic power is becoming concentrated in the hands of a very small number of corporations and decision-makers, often without sufficient democratic oversight or broader societal accountability.

This is not an anti-technology argument.

It is a concern about balance.

Current estimates suggest that approximately 276,000 workers across the United States have already been laid off amid the first major wave of AI-driven restructuring and automation. Those numbers continue to rise across technology, media, logistics, customer service, administration, and the creative industries.

This is no longer a future concern. It is happening now.

The executive order primarily studies the problem, reviews existing systems, expands workforce training, encourages AI adoption, and evaluates future policy recommendations. These are valuable steps, but they are not yet sufficient.

The executive order does not currently:

- prohibit or meaningfully limit AI-driven workforce replacement,
- require human oversight where AI assumes human functions,
- create enforceable worker protections,
- establish a worker grievance or reinstatement process,
- create accountability mechanisms for large-scale AI displacement,
- or provide meaningful protections for creative, technical, and administrative workers already affected by AI substitution.

In practical terms, the executive order largely prepares Californians to adapt to AI-driven displacement, rather than establishing meaningful guardrails designed to prevent unnecessary human displacement in the first place.

That distinction matters.

The proposed Human-AI Workforce Protection and Augmentation Act was developed to build upon the important foundation established by the executive order and move it into meaningful legislation.

The proposal includes:

- human-in-the-loop requirements,
- AI displacement transparency,
- workforce transition protections,
- economic accountability mechanisms,
- retroactive review protections for workers displaced during 2025 and 2026,
- human oversight requirements in high-impact systems,
- and incentives encouraging AI augmentation rather than full human replacement.

The goal is not to stop innovation.

The goal is to ensure humanity remains attached to it.

Artificial intelligence may become one of the most powerful technologies ever created. It can improve medicine, science, education, productivity, and quality of life on a global scale. But without meaningful policy guidance, it may also accelerate economic instability, workforce erosion, and the removal of human beings from systems they helped build.

California has historically led the nation during moments of technological transformation. From environmental standards to digital privacy protections, the state has repeatedly demonstrated that innovation and public responsibility can coexist.

This moment demands that same level of leadership.

The Human-AI Workforce Protection and Augmentation Act is respectfully offered not as opposition to the executive order, but as a meaningful next step forward — one designed to transform concern into enforceable protections and long-term human-centered policy.

The future will undoubtedly be built with artificial intelligence.

The question before us is whether that future will still meaningfully include humanity.

More information and the full legislative proposal can be found at:

www.sohtai.org

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Respectfully,

Bruce L. Jurgens