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The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
& Transportation
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science,
& Transportation
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Technology Engagement Center ("C_TEC") applauds the Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation ("the Committee") for recognizing the importance of data and technology in addressing the coronavirus pandemic by holding its paper hearing on "Enlisting Big Data in the Fight Against Coronavirus." The Chamber believes that data will be a powerful tool for healthcare workers, epidemiologists and supply chain managers to tackle the challenges brought by the pandemic.

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams described this current period as a "Pearl Harbor moment."[1] Despite the national distress that resulted from Pearl Harbor and World War II, the seeds of today's technological advancements were planted during the 1940s. In order to defeat Nazi Germany, British cryptographers needed to crack enemy codes to advance the Allied cause. This urgent need led innovators to build the world's first programmable digital electronic computer." The struggles of World War II enabled the technology that sent astronauts to the moon, powered programmers in garages to develop the commercial Internet, and will help epidemiologists track, model and defeat pandemics.

Today a new code must be cracked—how to defeat the spread of coronavirus, get Americans back to work, and effectively prepare for future pandemics. Today's new challenges have the potential to harness that same innovative spirit which will be the backbone of America's public health and economic recovery.

Policymakers should encourage the private sector to take an active role in responsibly sharing and analyzing data and protect individual privacy and security. Whenever possible datasets should be aggregated and anonymized when practicable and appropriate to protect public health. The FTC should disseminate information about privacy enhancing technologies and policies to inform companies and other organizations of effective data anonymization. At the same time, agencies should not require companies to collect and share data if their systems are

[1] Sarah Westwood, "Surgeon General: This Week will be a 'Pearl Harbor' and '9/11' moment," CNN (April 5, 2020) *available at* https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/05/politics/jerome-adams-coronavirus/index.html.

not adequately designed to protect consumer data outside the context of their core business models.

A national privacy standard would solve many of the privacy questions posed by coronavirus-related data sharing by providing clarity and certainty to industry. Establishing a unified national privacy framework will help enable a rapid and consistent response to the pandemic.

In addition, artificial intelligence is playing a key role in addressing the pandemic. C_TEC also encourages policymakers to advance innovative and forward-looking policies to ensure U.S. global leadership in artificial intelligence to address the challenges arising from the coronavirus.

On January 30, 2020 C_TEC released a report *Data for Good: Promoting Health, Safety, and Inclusion* highlighting the benefits of data to society-specifically about how seemingly unrelated data to health could promote positive health outcomes.[2] According to the report, "a complementary set of tools is emerging to help physicians. Doctors are increasingly turning to data on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) to improve the quality of care they deliver and improve their ability to practice medicine the way they want."[3] Core business data, with appropriate privacy protections, can be used in novel ways to combat the coronavirus and enable economic recovery.

Additionally, the business community is already using data to combat the pandemic. Below are a few examples of how technology and companies that analyze data are helping[4]:

- ***Airlines for America (A4A)*** has worked with private sector partners to develop a new website and mobile device application that will allow travelers arriving in the U.S. – by air or sea – to help provide additional contact tracing information to government officials. These innovations are compatible with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) systems and can be implemented within 72 hours to begin providing additional data to the CDC.

- ***Google's*** DeepMind has also released predictions to help scientists better understand the protein structure of the coronavirus. In addition, Verily is developing a small, body-worn temperature patch that transmits data to a phone application to provide timely notification of fever and support earlier diagnosis and treatment of a viral infection like the flu or coronavirus. This could be especially useful in elderly populations, where viral infections have higher rates of morbidity and mortality.[5]

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[2] Michael Turner, "*Data for Good: Promoting Health, Safety, and Inclusion,"* Chamber Technology Engagement Center (January 30, 2020) *available at* https://americaninnovators.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CTEC_DataForGood_v4-DIGITAL.pdf.
[3] *Id.*
[4] For more information, please visit www.americaninnovators.com/coronavirus.
[5] https://deepmind.com/research/open-source/computational-predictions-of-protein-structures-associated-with-COVID-19

- ***HERE Technologies*** used data to create an interactive mapping and tracking tool displaying the spread of the coronavirus over time. The map provides an overview of the latest situation, including the total number of confirmed cases, as well as deaths and recoveries.[6]

- ***IBM*** partnered with the White House Office and Science and Technology Policy and the U.S. Department of Energy to launch an unprecedented effort to bring supercomputers into the fight against COVID-19, making their considerable capabilities available to researchers worldwide in search of treatments and a cure.[7] IBM Research also has been actively developing new cloud and AI-powered technologies to help researchers, doctors and scientists accelerate COVID-19 drug discovery. These tools include artificial intelligence to query data on drug outcomes, analyze unique molecules related to COVID-19 for therapeutics, genomic-sequence studies, and an incidents map available through the Weather Channel app and weather.com that puts trusted, local information on COVID-19 in the hands of citizens and researchers.

- ***Microsoft*** has worked with the CDC to help deliver information and eliminate bottlenecks with a coronavirus assessment bot and has also through Bing launched a coronavirus tracker to show updated infection statistics and the latest news globally.[8]

- ***Oracle*** has set up a cloud system that would help the U.S. government find a cure faster. The company also set up and donated to the U.S. government a "therapeutic learning system" which would allow doctors and patients to record responses to promising drug therapies.[9]

- ***RELX*** is opening its Elsevier database with research and health information to the public. This includes more than 20,000 relevant articles from across 2,500 journals, including Cell and The Lancet, as well as care plans and skills guides for clinicians and related resources for patients. Working with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, Elsevier is also making this important body of literature available on NIH's PubMed Central, and other public repositories such as the World Health Organization's coronavirus database, in a machine-readable format with rights for full text-and-data-mining and analysis to help the global scientific response.

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[6] https://app.developer.here.com/coronavirus/

[7] https://covid19-hpc-consortium.org/blog , authored by Dario Gil, Director of IBM Research and The Honorable Paul Dabbar, Undersecretary for Science, U.S. Department of Energy.

[8] https://bing.com/covid; https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2020/03/20/delivering-information-and-eliminating-bottlenecks-with-cdcs-covid-19-assessment-bot/

[9] https://www.businessinsider.com/oracle-cloud-therapeutic-learning-system-tools-covid-19-cure-2020-3

- ***SAP, Qualtrics, and EY*** have developed healthcare specific solutions to help hospitals identify and route high-risk patients and assist call centers collect real-time data that can quickly be analyzed to aid crisis management response.

- ***SAS*** launched an interactive coronavirus dashboard that depicts status, location and spread of the virus, including trend and location analytics. Users can analyze data at the state and country level and see the latest on case status over time (confirmed, recovered, active, deaths), mortality and recovery rates, visualizations of the spread over time and country-to-country comparisons. The dashboard has prompted collaborations with state health departments to create custom dashboards to help state leaders make better decisions as they manage an unprecedented crisis.[10]

- ***Salesforce*** announced to its customers on Monday that it would offer free services to emergency response teams through its Health Cloud program. Tableau, owned by Salesforce, is also offering a 'free data resource hub' to help organizations understand coronavirus data quickly using data from Johns Hopkins University as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- ***Splunk*** created a set of interactive dashboards to provide a data-driven approach to track the coronavirus. An individual or organization can download a Splunk app, populate it with their own data, and use it to help get a better understanding of the data behind the pandemic. The dashboards will help leaders bring data to the crisis and evaluate potential responses to best ensure public safety.[11]

The Chamber looks forward to working with you to ensure that public health and individual privacy are both maximized to defeat the coronavirus and encourage economic recovery.

Sincerely,

Tom Quaadman

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation

[10] https://tbub.sas.com/COVID19/
[11] https://www.splunk.com/en_us/blog/leadership/bringing-data-to-covid-19.html