



Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 469.

As AI systems become more sophisticated—writing, reasoning, creating images, and even conversing in ways that seem human—it’s increasingly important that our statutes keep pace with technological change. But sophistication is not sentience. It is not personhood. AI may simulate human reason to a degree, but it cannot and must not be permitted to supplant it.

House Bill 469 establishes a clear legal framework for this reality. It affirms that artificial intelligence systems are nonsentient entities and cannot be recognized as persons, which means they cannot be: spouses, officers, property holders, employers or employees under Ohio law.

This bill also ensures proper legal accountability. Under its provisions, the humans and organizations who design, deploy, and operate AI systems remain responsible for their use and their detrimental effects. If an AI system causes injury or damage, liability falls to the owner, developer, or operator—not the algorithm itself, no matter how sophisticated. This principle is consistent with centuries of common law. Under Anglo common law, legal personhood is the gatekeeping concept for a number of rights and privileges—entering contracts or standing in court, for instance—and anything outside of that concept cannot bear legal rights or obligations in and of itself. Common law has long treated these non-persons as instruments of the responsible human, not as liable agents. This bill is intended to prevent the emergence of legal loopholes that could allow corporations, and any other bad-faith actors, to deflect responsibility through “AI agents.”

Additionally, House Bill 469 guards against speculative future claims of AI “rights” or “personhood.” Across the world, there are early efforts—both academic and legislative—to treat advanced AI systems as entities with autonomy or moral standing. These efforts are in their infancy, but they are indeed happening. Ohio’s citizens deserve clarity that, in this state, legal personhood is reserved for people—living, sentient beings—not for machines, no matter how intelligent they appear.

Importantly, this legislation does not hinder innovation. It does not regulate code, algorithms, or research. Instead, it establishes the boundaries of accountability and definition within which innovation can safely occur.

Finally, HB 469 reflects a broader principle: technology must serve humanity, not replace it. As policymakers, it is our responsibility to anticipate the ethical and legal implications of emerging systems before they overtake the frameworks meant to govern them. AI is simply one such system, which is emerging faster than most.

Vice Chair, members, thank you for permitting me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 469. I appreciate any questions, input or feedback you may have.