

# Washington State Poised to Launch Artificial Intelligence Task Force

Paul L. Singer, Abigail Stempson, Beth Bolen Chun

March 21, 2024

As we have [previously reported](#), state attorneys general (AGs) have [great interest](#) in [artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) and we do not see this stopping anytime soon. This time, our focus is on a bipartisan legislative proposal from [Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson](#) to create an AI task force, which the Washington State Legislature passed ([Senate Bill 5838](#)) and now awaits the governor's signature.

The 19-member task force would consist of technology industry representatives, a civil liberties organization representative, subject matter experts, and other stakeholders. Indicative of the [importance to AGs of protecting children](#), one of those members must represent a statewide teachers association. The taskforce would also include a representative of a statewide retail association and of an independent business association. The task force would meet at least twice a year to review policies, identify emergent risks, and provide recommendations to the legislature related to AI technology. The bill provides that the AG's office administer the task force, whose duties would also include:

- Examining the development and use of generative AI by both private and public sector entities;
- Making recommendations to the legislature regarding standards for the use and regulation of generative AI systems to protect the safety, privacy, and civil and intellectual property rights of the state's citizens.

While businesses should keep an eye on AI developments in Washington state as the AG is generally on the forefront of many consumer matters, the reporting by the taskforce won't be seen for quite some time if the bill passes; an interim report is due December 1, 2025 and a final report is due June 1, 2027.

AGs remain incredibly focused on AI and are continually looking for opportunities to develop policy and enforcement initiatives around this powerful technology. AG Ferguson's emphasis on AI through an inclusive task force is not a novel initiative, as states such as [Alabama](#), [Massachusetts](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Wisconsin](#) have already launched similar task forces:

- Massachusetts's task force was established on February 14 to study AI and generative AI technology and its impact on the state, private businesses, higher education institutions, and constituents. The aim of Massachusetts's new task force is to provide recommendations for how the state can best support its businesses in leading sectors around AI adoption. In addition, the task force will provide recommendations focused on startups' ability to scale and succeed in Massachusetts. The task force will present its final recommendations to the governor later this

year.

- Alabama’s task force launched on February 8 and will recommend policies for the responsible and effective use of generative AI in state executive-branch agencies. A report on the task force’s findings on current generative AI use in executive branch agencies and their recommendations for responsibly deploying such technology is due to the governor by November 30, 2024.
- New Jersey’s task force launched on October 10, 2023 and is focused on studying emerging AI technologies. New Jersey’s task force is also responsible for analyzing AI’s potential impacts on society as well as preparing recommendations to identify government actions encouraging the ethical use of AI technologies. The task force’s findings and recommendations will be presented to the governor no later than 12 months from the effective date of the order.
- Wisconsin’s task force launched on August 23, 2023 to study the effects of AI on Wisconsin’s workforce. The task force is responsible for gathering and analyzing information to produce an advisory action plan for the governor, such as recommending policy directions and investments related to workforce development and educational systems to capitalize on the AI transformation. The goal is to have an action plan for the governor’s consideration in early 2025.

There will likely be more states developing task forces and legislation in the coming years, as states continue to balance AI’s utility with its risk. And don’t forget; state consumer protection laws are broad and already apply to AI.