State Legislators Announce Major Investment In Artificial Intelligence At University At Buffalo

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Senator Sean Ryan speaks about Empire AI at the University at Buffalo's North Campus, March 22, 2024

New York State Invests $250 Million to Establish 'Empire AI' at UB, Secures Additional $25 Million Commitment from SUNY

ALBANY, NY – Today, April 18, 2024, New York State Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblymember Karen McMahon announced that the FY 2024-2025 state budget will

include $250 million to establish Empire AI, a state-owned research and computing facility at the University at Buffalo that will expand the use of artificial intelligence across New York. In addition to the $250 million state investment, SUNY will contribute $25 million to the program over a 10-year period.

Operated by a not-for-profit consortium of researchers and scientists, Empire AI will research ethical and public interest uses of artificial intelligence. As this rapidly evolving technology changes the way people work, investments in public AI projects like this one will help ensure New York's workforce develops alongside AI technology, rather than in contention with it. Reflecting one of the most pressing public concerns with AI growth, the consortium will be required to demonstrate adequate privacy controls and data protection.

Advocacy from Senator Ryan, chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Economic Development, and Small Business, was instrumental in ensuring that Empire AI projects will be subject to labor standards and include robust reporting to ensure the project is meeting its economic potential. The consortium will be required to submit annual audited financials to the state, and Empire State Development Corporation will produce an annual report with updated goals, a summary of investments, metrics regarding job creation, and any other parameters detailing the program's economic development impact on the state. Empire AI will also be required to abide by energy efficiency standards, and the consortium will partner with small businesses to support job creation and research advancement.

Senator Sean Ryan said, "This investment is a big win for the University at Buffalo that will have a massive impact on how AI impacts the future of our state. Empire AI is an opportunity for New York to get ahead of the curve on AI development and bring stable, good-paying jobs to the state. Housing the program at UB will make the university even more attractive to the next generation of tech leaders, and it will place Buffalo among the national leaders in AI research and development. I thank Governor Hochul for leading the

way to bring this incredible initiative to Western New York."

Assemblymember Karen McMahon said, "The inclusion of $250 million in this year's state budget for Empire AI at the University at Buffalo demonstrates a profound vote of confidence in UB, and the importance of Empire AI in leading the research and development of this rapidly growing field. As the premier institution of higher education and research in Western New York, and a flagship university in the SUNY system, it is altogether fitting that UB be the home for Empire AI. This investment is certain to spark significant growth in the university and our community."

UB President Satish K. Tripathi said, "The University at Buffalo is very excited to be part of the Empire AI consortium, which will place Western New York and New York State at the epicenter for AI research, innovation and job creation and UB is honored to have been named the home of the Empire AI research institute. For over four decades, UB has been recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in socially responsible AI research and application. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to the members of the Western New York Delegation for their steadfast support of this transformative initiative and to Governor Kathy Hochul for her bold vision for New York State."