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Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the value of having a social worker on the AI Advisory Task Force. My name is Darlene Furey and I am the Executive Director of NASW VT.

I want to applaud legislators for including a social worker on the task force. As you will hear, we are exceptionally well suited for such a role.

Social workers bring a unique perspective to the conversation about artificial intelligence due to their multidisciplinary approach and biopsychosocial perspective. Social workers combine knowledge and theories of social work, psychology, sociology, education, social policy, medicine, and neuroscience. Artificial intelligence policy is more than technology policy, it is social policy due to its social implications. It would enhance the discussion of the task force to include a member who can bring a multidisciplinary approach, that combines biological and social sciences. Social workers are also concerned with the impact of social policy at multiple levels. Our training demands that we examine issues on individual, community and societal levels.

Social workers have been considering the issue of artificial intelligence for some time, as evidenced by the creation of The Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society (CAIS) is a joint venture between the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. Founded in 2016, CAIS conducts research in artificial intelligence to help solve the most difficult social problems facing our world. The center has received accolades for its work to apply AI to address HIV prevention and to deter wildlife poaching. In addition, this fall will see the release of the text: Social Work and Artificial Intelligence, which will lay out an ethical framework for social workers to use when considering Artificial Intelligence as well as an examination of its risks, benefits and challenges.

The profession of social work is grounded in a strong foundation of ethics. The primary mission of the social work profession is to promote human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

This mission is rooted in a set of core values, the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This mission and these values have a lot to contribute to the discussion about the potential benefits and risks of artificial intelligence to human society, especially regarding public safety, privacy, and self-determination. Artificial intelligence will have implications on human rights. Social workers have a profound commitment to human rights.

The bill defines "artificial intelligence" as "models and systems performing functions generally associated with human intelligence, such as reasoning and learning." In addition to ethics, social workers also have expertise in human intelligence and consciousness, including reasoning and learning, as well as the emotional aspects of humanity. They have experience in treating mental and social problems, which could be useful when exploring the potential risks and challenges of artificial intelligence.

Social workers highlight the impact of the environment and relationships on human development and behavior. If machines are designed to mimic human learning and neural network development, then their environments and their relationships will play a significant role in machine development. A social work understanding could strengthen the healthy development of artificial intelligence.

In addition, social workers are committed to bringing the the view of "the people" to the table. They could also be counted on to contribute to the process by seeking to have an inclusive testimony process that brings in the voices of people who are not usually included in the decisions that affect their lives.

A social worker who has expertise in ethics, human rights, and psychotherapy could bring a strong voice and a vital perspective to the conversation about the ethical development of artificial intelligence.