Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6315

December 13, 2023

Hon. Shalanda Young
Director
White House Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Hon. Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Director Young and Secretary Raimondo:

Thank you for your efforts to mitigate the risks posed by the advent of widespread artificial intelligence (AI) technology use. As generative AI tools such as chatbots and image generators proliferate and enter mainstream use, this work is becoming increasingly important in ensuring fairness and a level playing field for everyday Americans, especially the hardworking small business owners that power our economy.

As more state, local, and potentially federal agencies deploy AI large-language model (LLM) chatbots to provide services and advice to small business owners, we must ensure the information they provide is reliable and helpful. To this end, President Biden's recent Executive Order 14,110, directing agencies and departments to report on government AI use risk mitigation, and Vice President Harris's announcement of an AI Safety Institute to issue relevant guidance are very helpful.[1] We hope to see, in these forthcoming reports and guidance, perspectives on the use of LLM chatbots to help make government services more accessible and available to all.

As you may know, the City of New York recently announced the creation of the first-of-its-kind MyCity chatbot, developed in tandem with Microsoft and OpenAI. This chatbot is intended to answer questions about operating small businesses, including guidance on City small business services and resources, compliance with regulatory requirements, and small business planning. For questions it is unable to answer, the MyCity chatbot will connect users to a human city employee to help respond to their requests. While the MyCity chatbot currently operates only in English, we understand that there are plans to provide and expand non-English language access.[2]

---

[1] Exec. Order No. 14,110, 88 Fed. Reg. 75,191 (Oct. 30, 2023); *FACT SHEET: Vice President Harris Announces New U.S. Initiatives to Advance the Safe and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence*, THE WHITE HOUSE (Nov. 1, 2023), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/01/fact-sheet-vice-president-harris-announces-new-u-s-initiatives-to-advance-the-safe-and-responsible-use-of-artificial-intelligence.

[2] *Transcript: Mayor Adams Releases First-of-Its-Kind Plan for Responsible Artificial Intelligence Use in NYC Government*, CITY OF N.Y. (Oct. 16, 2023), https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/782-23/transcript-mayor-adams-releases-first-of-its-kind-plan-responsible-artificial-intelligence-use; Ethan Stark-Miller, *Mayor Adams Rolls Out AI Action Plan, 'Chatbot' to Assist Small Business Owners,* AMNY (Oct. 16, 2023),

The MyCity chatbot, and others that follow, have great potential to streamline Americans' navigation of the byzantine layers of government, and with more language features, to make it more accessible to immigrant Americans. We are particularly encouraged by the MyCity chatbot's weblink citations leading to human-written content in its answers to users and its advice to verify information from outputs.

With that said, great uncertainty surrounds LLMs' ability to share information reliably and accurately, especially of the technical kind needed by small businesses to start up, interact with government agencies, and navigate rules and regulations. As you know, widely accessible LLM chatbots quickly generate text statistically likely to appear human-written, accurate, and tailored to user requests. Because of these capabilities, last year's release of the LLM ChatGPT by OpenAI captured the imagination of people all over the world. However, documented cases quickly surfaced of LLM chatbots printing false information (also known as hallucinations),[3] omitting important facts in outputs,[4] and expressing racial prejudice.[5] LLM chatbots' judgement calls in what information to consider, include, exclude, emphasize, and downplay in their outputs are not well-understood or transparent.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you incorporate the following considerations in your upcoming research and guidance:

1) The levels of frequency and significance of inaccuracies and information omissions acceptable for chatbots providing routine government services and regulatory advice;
2) Recommendations on safeguards against hallucinations or information omissions in agency chatbot outputs and best practices for agency implementation;
3) How to best evaluate, measure, and address racial and other bias in chatbot outputs and decision making;
4) Recommendations on which questions agency chatbots should deem unanswerable and needing human answers;
5) Recommended metrics for agencies to evaluate chatbot output quality and user satisfaction;
6) Measures to optimize the ease-of-use and accessibility of small business-facing agency chatbots for entrepreneurs; and
7) Potential remedies that agencies serving small businesses can use in the event any future chatbots inaccurately counsel an entrepreneur.

---

https://www.amny.com/politics/mayor-adams-rolls-out-ai-action-plan-chatbot-to-assist-small-business-owners.
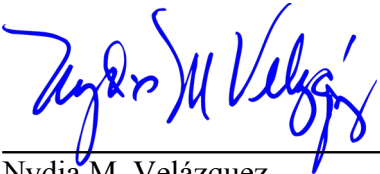
[3] Hussam Alkaissi & Samy I. McFarlane, *Artificial Hallucinations in ChatGPT: Implications in Scientific Writing*, CUREUS (2023), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9939079/.

[4] Kees Van Deemter & Ehud Reiter, *"Lying" in Computer-Generated Texts: Hallucinations and Omissions*, OXFORD UNIV. (Jun. 29, 2023), https://blog.oup.com/2023/06/lying-in-computer-generated-texts-hallucinations-and-omissions; Kalliopi Terzidou, *Generative AI for the Legal Profession: Facing the Implications of the Use of ChatGPT Through an Intradisciplinary Approach*, MEDIALAWS (Sep. 8, 2023), https://www.medialaws.eu/generative-ai-for-the-legal-profession-facing-the-implications-of-the-use-of-chatgpt-through-an-intradisciplinary-approach.

[5] Thomas Germain, *'They're All So Dirty and Smelly:' Study Unlocks ChatGPT's Inner Racist*, GIZMODO (Apr. 13, 2023), https://gizmodo.com/chatgpt-ai-openai-study-frees-chat-gpt-inner-racist-1850333646.

We are excited to see LLM technology mature and revolutionize the way we as public officials engage and serve entrepreneurs and other constituents. However, as government agencies begin deploying these tools for widespread public use, it is important that they remain reliable and helpful, and minimize implicit biases. We look forward to reviewing your work and further engaging on this issue for the benefit of America's small businesses. Please contact Matt Low from the House Committee on Small Business at matthew.low@mail.house.gov for any questions you may have. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Nydia M. Velázquez
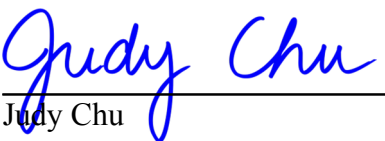Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business

Morgan McGarvey
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Innovation,
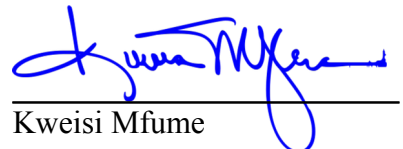Entrepreneurship, and
Workforce Development

Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress
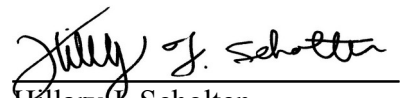
Dean Phillips
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress