

Blog Post: **AI and Jobs: The Ideas Exist. The Action Doesn't.**; Andrew Broughton

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In a few months, I will graduate from college and enter the workforce as a software engineer. Like many in my generation, I've grown increasingly concerned about what AI could mean for the future of work. This apprehension is not just speculative; since late 2022, employment for software developers aged 22–25 [has already dropped by 20 percent](#). There is substantial research going into the scale of this problem and into potential solutions, but there is a lack of action. With AI capabilities advancing faster than our existing labor structures can handle, US policymakers need to act on AI-driven labor displacement before it is too late.

My argument for action is not rooted in certainty about what's coming. In fact, there remains a substantial divide among experts. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei has warned that AI could eliminate [roughly half of all entry-level white-collar jobs within five years](#), pushing unemployment as high as 20 percent. On the other side, The Budget Lab at Yale University has been tracking US labor market data monthly since ChatGPT's launch and finds that the picture that emerges is one that largely [reflects stability, not major disruption at an economy-wide level](#). Other data tell a similarly divided story: the IMF estimates that [60 percent of jobs in advanced economies face meaningful AI exposure](#), while the New York Federal Reserve reported in September that only [one percent of service firms](#) had actually conducted layoffs driven by AI in the prior six months. Zeroing in on public perception, [64% of Americans expect AI to lead to fewer jobs over the next 20 years](#), evidence that, despite this still being a contested question, a majority of the public is wary about what's to come.

This uncertainty should encourage action, rather than hinder it. There is a clear asymmetry between outcomes. If optimists are right, and the labor market remains stable with AI advancement, preemptive policy measures would have little to no cost. However, if pessimists are right, inaction before it is too late would mean massive unemployment that we would not be able to handle. Because of this asymmetry, now is clearly the time to take action, rather than after a massive shakeup that results in irreversible damage.

AI leaders, economists, and policymakers are putting serious thought into how to address these concerns. The proposals span the political spectrum and don't require certainty about how bad displacement will get; they just require agreement that the risk is worth preparing for. Anthropic has started an Economic Futures program, focused on the economic impacts of AI,

with one publication [outlining nine categories of policy responses](#) ranging from tax reform to portable benefits. Similarly, OpenAI recently published “[Industrial Policy for the Intelligence Age](#)”, a blueprint proposing policy ideas such as portable benefits, wage insurance, and automatic safety nets that activate when displacement crosses defined thresholds.

Economists Anton Korinek and Lee Lockwood at the University of Virginia have proposed a [public finance framework for the age of AI](#). The core problem they highlight is that AI jeopardizes traditional tax bases by reducing demand for human labor. To combat this, they recommend a shift from reliance on labor taxes to consumption taxes. They propose that this shift, along with accompanying measures (modernizing consumption tax systems, building administrative capacity), would allow fiscal sustainability without hindering innovation.

Alex Bores, a congressional candidate from New York (notable for sponsoring the RAISE Act, an AI accountability bill), recently put forward “[The AI Dividend](#).” The policy proposal is framed as a preventive measure against AI-driven displacement: “It is not a punishment for innovation—it is an insurance policy. Just as we buy fire insurance not because we expect our house to burn down, but because we cannot afford the risk of being unprepared, the AI Dividend ensures that if AI dramatically reduces employment, Americans have a floor to stand on.”

None of these proposals is particularly radical, but no meaningful policy measure has been put into place yet; even modest first steps have failed. In 2023, Biden’s [Executive Order 14110](#) directed federal agencies to assess AI’s workforce impacts and develop guidance, but this was rescinded by Trump on his first day in office. Agencies had spent months developing plans and creating frameworks, all of which were rendered obsolete by the rescission. The [AI Workforce PREPARE Act](#) would require employers to give workers notice when AI is identified as a substantial factor in layoffs, and the [AI-Related Job Impacts Clarity Act](#) would require employers to report quarterly on AI-related job impacts, including layoffs and job displacement. Both of these Acts, introduced in 2025, have since stalled.

There are several reasons for this inaction. The current executive administration has shown opposition to any AI regulation that can be framed as a hindrance to innovation. [Tech companies have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into PACs](#) specifically targeting

lawmakers who advance AI regulation. And some policymakers see the empirical uncertainty as grounds for waiting, but this inaction may cost us the window to act before the damage is done.

Nobody is certain what the impacts of AI will be on the workforce in the next few years, or in the longer term. But the policy proposals exist, the logic is sound, and the cost of acting now is far lower than the cost of waiting. The public is already ahead of Washington; [79 percent of people](#) are concerned the government has no plan to protect workers from AI disruption, and that concern is only growing. What's missing isn't awareness, it's political will. We need more elected officials willing to put forward real proposals, like the ones outlined above, rather than waiting for certainty that may never come. Now is the time to build institutions and safety nets before they are needed, not after. The window won't stay open forever.