



Oral Testimony

Alexander Alonso, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP
Chief Data & Analytics Officer, SHRM
New York State Legislative Hearing on Artificial Intelligence
January 15, 2026

Chair Gonzalez and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the risks, solutions, and best practices related to the use of AI in high-risk and consequential settings.

My name is Dr. Alexander Alonso, and I am the Chief Data and Analytics Officer at SHRM. In this role, I lead our workforce intelligence and research efforts, helping translate data and evidence into practical guidance that employers can actually use.

As the voice of work, workers, and the workplace, SHRM is a leading convener and thought leader on issues shaping today's workforce. We represent more than 340,000 HR professionals globally, including over 13,000 members here in New York state. Collectively, SHRM members impact the lives of more than 362 million workers and families worldwide.

SHRM agrees with the Committee that AI must be governed responsibly — in ways that are fair, transparent, accountable, and worthy of public trust. We also believe the greatest value comes when artificial intelligence is paired with human intelligence. As SHRM President and CEO Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., has said, “AI (artificial intelligence) plus HI (human intelligence) equals ROI (return on investment).”

Thoughtful policy should reinforce that balance. But if requirements are overly broad or unworkable, they risk discouraging responsible innovation. It is from that real-world perspective that SHRM approaches today's discussion.

AI in the workplace: what the data shows

SHRM research shows that more than 40 percent of organizations now use AI in at least one HR function — a significant increase over the past two years. Most often, these tools support recruiting, writing job descriptions, matching candidate skills, and improving administrative efficiency.

Just as important, our data shows that AI is being used to support human judgment, not replace it. Nearly nine in ten HR professionals whose organizations use AI say it saves time or improves efficiency, and more than one-third report lower hiring and recruitment costs. Workers share this view: 74 percent of U.S. workers believe AI should complement, not replace, human talent, and 77 percent emphasize the need for human oversight.

When AI is paired with clear governance, documentation, monitoring, and meaningful human oversight, it can reduce inconsistency, expand access to opportunity, and support fairer outcomes.

At the same time, the risks are real. Poorly designed systems, weak accountability, or misuse of automated tools can cause harm. HR professionals understand this, and they are actively working

every day to identify and manage these risks in real workplaces.

Considerations with S1169 / A8884

We appreciate the intent behind Senate Bill 1169 and Assembly Bill 8884 and we fully share the goal of preventing algorithmic discrimination. Protecting workers is essential. However, SHRM opposes this legislation in its current form. Intent alone is not enough. The details matter, and as written, these proposals risk creating unintended consequences that could undermine both fairness and opportunity in the workplace.

- As drafted, the definition of “high-risk AI” is overly broad and unclear. That lack of precision risks pulling in widely used, lower-risk tools and creates uncertainty for employers that are making good-faith efforts to use technology responsibly.
- We are also concerned about the cumulative burden of the compliance requirements. Repeated third-party audits, extensive reporting, and public disclosures may be manageable for large organizations, but for small and mid-sized employers — which make up most New York workplaces — these costs could be prohibitive.
- The provisions related to advance notice, opt-out, and post-decision appeals raise similar concerns. While well-intended, they could slow hiring and advancement in ways that ultimately reduce access to opportunity, especially in a labor market where many job seekers already face significant barriers.
- Finally, the combination of substantial civil penalties, a private right of action, and a presumption of liability would significantly increase legal exposure — even for employers acting in good faith. When the cost of error becomes this high, employers hesitate to innovate. That hesitation ultimately harms both organizations and the workers seeking opportunity.

Recommendations:

As New York considers its next steps on AI in the workplace, SHRM stands ready to be a constructive partner in developing a framework that both protects workers and works in real workplaces — and with that in mind, we offer the following recommendations:

- First, workplace AI standards should be grounded in clarity, consistency, and compliance. Clarity ensures everyone understands how AI is being used. Consistency helps avoid a confusing patchwork of rules across jurisdictions. And compliance means employers have workable, aligned requirements they can realistically meet.
- Second, AI policy should protect workers without stifling innovation. If regulation becomes overly prescriptive or fragmented, employers will hesitate to adopt tools that improve hiring, efficiency, and access to opportunity. A balanced approach is essential so that New York safeguards workers while still allowing responsible innovation to move forward.

- Third, employers need clear guidance and realistic timelines. Education, implementation support, and a phased approach will help organizations — especially small and mid-sized employers — successfully operationalize requirements while continuing to meet workforce needs.
- Finally, HR expertise should help guide this work — and SHRM stands ready to be a partner. AI in the workplace is ultimately about people, and HR professionals are closest to how these tools affect recruiting, advancement, and everyday work.

Closing:

SHRM believes that responsible AI policy must protect workers while remaining grounded in how employment decisions are made in real workplaces. We welcome the opportunity to continue engaging with this Committee to help shape an approach that promotes fairness, safeguards workers, and remains practical for employers to implement.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.