Ted Cruz plan to punish states that regulate AI shot down in 99-1 vote

Cruz blamed “outside interests”

After the compromise fell apart, the Senate voted 99-1 for Blackburn’s amendment to remove the AI provision from the budget bill. Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) cast the only vote against the amendment.

“Cruz ultimately got behind Blackburn’s amendment early Tuesday, acknowledging that ‘many of my colleagues would prefer not to vote on this matter,'” according to The Hill. Cruz said the five-year moratorium had support from President Trump and “protected kids and protected the rights of creative artists, but outside interests opposed that deal.”

However, Blackburn was quoted as saying that they “weren’t able to come to a compromise that would protect our governors, our state legislators, our attorney generals and, of course, House members who have expressed concern over this language… what we know is this—this body has proven that they cannot legislate on emerging technology.”

Cantwell pointed out that many state government officials from both major parties opposed the Cruz plan. “Despite several revisions by its author and misleading assurances about its true impact, state officials from across the country, including 17 Republican Governors and 40 state attorneys general, as well [as] conservative and liberal organizations—from the Heritage Foundation to the Center for

American Progress—rallied against the harmful proposal," Cantwell's office said.

Cantwell and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) had also filed an amendment to strip the AI moratorium from the bill. Markey said yesterday that "the Blackburn-Cruz so-called compromise is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Despite Republican efforts to hide the true impact of the AI moratorium, the language still allows the Trump administration to use federal broadband funding as a weapon against the states and still prevents states from protecting children online from Big Tech's predatory behavior."

Cantwell said at a recent press conference that 24 states last year started "regulating AI in some way, and they have adopted these laws that fill a gap while we are waiting for federal action." Yesterday, she called the Blackburn/Cruz compromise "another giveaway to tech companies" that "gives AI and social media a brand-new shield against litigation and state regulation."

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/07/ted-cruz-gives-up-on-ai-law-moratorium-joins-99-1-vote-against-his-own-plan/