WORKING FAMILIES POWER

To: Interested Parties
From: Working Families Power and the Justice Research Group
Date: June 23, 2026
Re: AI and the Working Class

Executive Summary and Findings

Working Families Power commissioned a national survey of working-class registered voters to better understand public attitudes toward artificial intelligence, job displacement, worker protections, and AI-related infrastructure. Justice Research Group fielded the survey online from May 21-26, 2026 among 2,511 working-class registered voters nationwide, including an oversample of 504 voters living in swing districts.

The findings reveal broad concern about the economic consequences of artificial intelligence. Nearly three-quarters of working-class voters express concern that AI will lead to job losses in the United States, while majorities believe AI is more likely to hurt than help working-class families over the next several years. Respondents also express strong support for policies designed to help workers adapt to technological change, including retraining programs, transition assistance, and advance notice requirements for workers whose jobs may be eliminated through AI.

The survey also finds widespread concern about the costs associated with AI infrastructure. Large majorities worry that AI data centers could increase electricity and utility costs for households and believe AI companies should bear responsibility for the infrastructure investments needed to support continued expansion. Across a variety of questions, respondents consistently express support for technological innovation when paired with protections designed to ensure that workers and communities share in the benefits of economic change.

Key Results

Finding	Result
Concerned that artificial intelligence will lead to job losses in the United States	**73%**
Concerned AI could affect their own job, household income, or jobs of people close to them	**62%**
Say AI will hurt working-class families overall over the next five years	**58%**
Support large-scale retraining and apprenticeship programs for workers whose jobs are changed by AI	**85%**
Agree AI companies should pay more of the costs for new power and infrastructure	**82%**

Working-Class Voters Express Broad Concern About AI-Driven Job Loss

Concern about AI's impact on employment emerges as one of the strongest and most consistent findings in the survey. When asked how concerned they are that artificial intelligence will lead to job losses in the United States over the next several years, nearly three-quarters of working-class voters say they are concerned, including more than one-third who are very concerned. The concern extends beyond the broader economy, with nearly two-thirds reporting concern that AI could affect their own job, household income, or the jobs of people close to them.

Respondents also express skepticism that AI will create more jobs than it eliminates. Asked which statement best describes their view of AI and jobs, respondents are more than three times as likely to say AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates as they are to say it will create more good jobs than it eliminates. Another third believe AI will mostly change jobs rather than eliminate them outright.

Open-ended responses reinforce these concerns. Job loss and worker replacement emerged as the most frequently cited concern about AI, appearing more often than concerns about misinformation, privacy, scams, surveillance, or impacts on children.

Exhibit 1. Working-Class Voters Associate AI With Job Loss and Household Economic Risk

Questions: "How concerned are you that artificial intelligence, or AI, will lead to job losses in the United States over the next few years?" "How concerned are you that AI could affect your own job, your household's income, or the jobs of people close to you?" "Which of the following best describes your view of AI and jobs right now?" "In your own words, what do you think artificial intelligence (AI) is mostly good for, and what concerns you most about it?"

Measure	Percent
Concerned AI will lead to job losses in the United States	**73%**
Very concerned AI will lead to job losses in the United States	**36%**
Concerned AI could affect own job, household income, or jobs of people close to them	**62%**
Say AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates	**42%**
Say AI will create more good jobs than it eliminates	**13%**
Mention job loss / worker replacement as an AI concern in open-ended responses	**34%**

Exhibit 2. Views of AI and Jobs Right Now

Question 110: "Which of the following best describes your view of AI and jobs right now?"

Response	Percent
AI will eliminate more jobs than it creates	**42%**
AI will mostly change jobs rather than eliminate them	**32%**
AI will create more good jobs than it eliminates	**13%**
I am not sure yet	**13%**

Respondents Believe Working-Class Families Are More Likely to Be Hurt Than Helped by AI

The survey asked respondents whether AI is likely to help or hurt a variety of workers and occupational groups over the next five years. In every category tested, respondents were more likely to say AI would hurt workers than help them.

The greatest concern centers on truck drivers and delivery workers, retail and service workers, writers and creative professionals, young people entering the workforce, and office and administrative workers. Most notably, respondents believe AI is substantially more likely to hurt working-class families overall than help them.

The consistency of these findings across occupations suggests that concerns about AI are not limited to a single industry or profession. Rather, respondents broadly perceive the risks of AI as falling most heavily on workers and their families.

Exhibit 3. Majorities Believe AI Will Hurt a Range of Worker Groups

Questions 111-118: "Do you think AI is most likely to help or hurt each of the following groups of workers over the next five years?"

Worker Group	Help	Hurt
Truck drivers and delivery workers	18%	61%
Retail and service workers	20%	58%
Working-class families overall	20%	58%
Writers, designers, and other creative workers	22%	57%
Young people entering the workforce	24%	56%
Office and administrative workers	24%	55%
Teachers and education workers	25%	48%
Healthcare support workers	27%	44%

Worker Protection Policies Receive Overwhelming Support

The survey finds broad support for government action to address the economic consequences of artificial intelligence. Every policy response tested receives majority support, including proposals that range from workforce training and transition assistance to direct government job creation and stronger requirements on corporations that use AI to eliminate jobs.

Support is strongest for retraining and apprenticeship programs (85%) and guaranteed access to free education and training for displaced workers (84%). More than eight in ten respondents also support requiring companies to provide advance notice before eliminating jobs through AI (82%) and requiring corporations to provide severance and transition assistance for displaced workers (82%).

Importantly, support extends well beyond workforce development programs. Nearly eight in ten respondents (79%) support policies that would ensure workers share in productivity gains generated by AI through higher pay, stronger benefits, profit-sharing arrangements, or shorter working hours. Nearly seven in ten (69%) support taxing large corporations that replace workers with AI and using those funds to support workers affected by displacement.

The survey also finds majority support for direct public action to create employment opportunities. Sixty-five percent support guaranteeing every worker who loses a job to AI access to a good-paying replacement job, demonstrating that support for government intervention extends beyond training and transition assistance to include more ambitious public responses to technological disruption.

Exhibit 4. Support for Worker Protection Policies

Questions 122-127: "Below is a list of possible responses to AI-related job loss. For each one, please indicate whether you support or oppose it." Question 130: "Thinking about the government's role, how much do you support or oppose each of the following ideas? Guaranteeing free training or education for workers displaced by AI."

Policy	Support
Create large-scale retraining and apprenticeship programs for workers whose jobs are changed by AI	**85%**
Guaranteeing free training or education for workers displaced by AI	**84%**
Require companies to give advance notice before eliminating peoples jobs with AI	**82%**
Require corporations to pay severance and offer transition assistance for workers displaced by AI	**82%**
Set rules so workers share in productivity gains from AI through higher pay, profit-sharing, shorter hours, or stronger benefits	**79%**
Tax large corporations that replace workers with AI and use that money to create a fund for worker unemployment and support	**69%**

The survey finds that respondents are not simply looking for workers to adapt to AI-driven economic change. They also support a more active role for government when corporations use AI to replace workers. Presented with competing statements, respondents sided with government action by nearly a three-to-one margin. Sixty-four percent agree that government should step in to protect jobs, pay, and economic security when corporations replace workers with AI, while only 22% say government should mostly stay out of the way. These findings suggest that concerns about AI are accompanied by an expectation that government has a responsibility to intervene when technological change threatens economic security.

Exhibit 5. Views on Government's Role When Corporations Replace Workers With AI

Question 139: "Which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is completely correct? If corporations use AI to replace workers... [A] The government should step in to protect jobs, pay, and economic security. [B] The government should mostly stay out of the way."

Response	Percent
Net: Statement A - The government should step in to protect jobs, pay, and economic security	**64%**
Net: Statement B - The government should mostly stay out of the way	**22%**
Neither / both equally	**14%**

Voters Respond Most Favorably to Messages That Emphasize Corporate Responsibility for AI-Driven Job Loss

The message-testing results suggest that working-class voters do not view AI-related job loss as an unavoidable consequence of technological progress. Instead, respondents respond most strongly to messages that identify corporate decision-makers and billionaires as responsible for how AI is deployed and who benefits from its economic gains.

The highest-performing statement tested was: “America should lead on AI innovation, but not by treating workers as disposable,” which 76% of respondents found convincing. Other top-performing messages followed a similar pattern. Seventy-three percent found the statement that “AI should work for working people, not just make billionaires richer while everyone else worries about losing their job,” convincing, while 71% found the statement that “If AI boosts profits, workers should share in the gains through better pay, better benefits, and stronger job protections.”

Candidate messages produced an even clearer pattern. One of the strongest-performing messages tested stated: “No one who wants to work should be left behind because a corporation replaced them with software.” Fully 70% of respondents said this message would make them more likely to support a candidate focused on AI and jobs, compared with just 10% who said it would make them less likely.

Taken together, the findings suggest that respondents do not primarily view AI as the source of economic disruption. Rather, they respond most strongly to narratives that focus on the choices corporations make about how AI is used, who benefits from the resulting productivity gains, and whether workers share in those benefits. Messages that frame AI as a question of corporate responsibility and economic fairness consistently outperform messages that treat technological change as inevitable or politically neutral.

Exhibit 6. Statements About AI and Jobs

Questions 132-138: "Below are some statements people could make about AI and jobs. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means not convincing at all and 5 means very convincing, please rate how convincing each one is."

Statement	Convincing (4-5)
America should lead on AI innovation, but not by treating workers as disposable.	**76%**
AI should work for working people, not just make billionaires richer while everyone else worries about losing their job.	**73%**
If AI boosts profits, workers should share in the gains through better pay, better benefits, and stronger job protections.	**71%**
When companies use AI to cut jobs, the government should guarantee that people can move into stable, good-paying work.	**63%**
AI will make people's lives easier by helping with everyday tasks and saving time.	**53%**
AI will create new types of jobs and industries, even if it replaces some existing jobs.	**50%**
We should be careful not to overregulate AI, because it could create new jobs and help the economy grow.	**49%**

AI Infrastructure Raises Concerns About Utility Costs

The survey also explored attitudes toward the infrastructure required to support the continued growth of AI. Concern about rising utility costs is widespread. When asked whether AI data centers could increase electricity and utility prices for ordinary households, more than three-quarters of respondents say they are concerned, including 42% who are very concerned.

Respondents also express caution regarding the pace of AI infrastructure development. Six in ten support temporary limits or moratoriums on new AI data centers while communities assess impacts on electricity prices, water use, and local infrastructure.

The strongest consensus appears around infrastructure costs. More than eight in ten respondents agree that AI companies should pay more of the costs associated with new power generation and infrastructure rather than passing those costs on to ordinary utility customers.

Exhibit 7. Attitudes Toward AI Data Centers and Infrastructure Costs

Question 146: "As AI companies build more large data centers, how concerned are you that electricity and utility prices could increase for ordinary households?" Question 147: "Some people have proposed pausing or slowing new AI data center construction until communities better understand the impacts on electricity prices, water use, and local infrastructure. Do you support or oppose temporary limits or moratoriums on new AI data centers while those impacts are studied?" Question 148: "Companies are building large data centers across the country to power AI systems. These facilities use significant electricity and water, but can also bring jobs and investment to local communities. Do you support or oppose building more AI data centers in your state or community?" Question 149: "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: AI companies should pay more of the costs for new power and infrastructure instead of passing those costs on to ordinary utility customers."

Measure	Percent
Concerned electricity and utility prices could increase for ordinary households	**76%**
Support temporary limits or moratoriums on new AI data centers while impacts are studied	**60%**
Support building more AI data centers in state or community	**36%**
Oppose building more AI data centers in state or community	**43%**
Agree AI companies should pay more of the costs for new power and infrastructure	**82%**
Disagree AI companies should pay more of the costs for new power and infrastructure	**12%**

Methodology

Working Families Power commissioned this survey and Justice Research Group fielded it online from May 21-26, 2026 among 2,511 working-class registered voters nationwide, including an oversample of 504 voters residing in swing districts.

The survey used a non-probability online sample. Researchers weighted respondents by age, gender, race and ethnicity, previous political participation, educational attainment, household income, and region to align the sample with benchmarks from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey.

The credibility interval for the full sample is +/- 2.7 percentage points.