

Beyond the Next Administration: Building Enduring Tech–Government Alliances for National Power

By Greg Sharpe

The tech industry can increase the nation’s trust in government by becoming a reliable and visibly accountable partner for securing America’s technological edge. Specifically, the tech industry can help Congress codify critical capabilities in law and funding provisions that outlast political cycles. Doing so successfully will require long-term relationships with legislators, bipartisan support, and clear safeguards that reassure the public that powerful technologies are used in the best interest of the nation.[\[1\]](#)

Why Trust and Continuity Matter

Recent trust surveys show that public confidence in both government and business has declined, with many people believing institutional leaders are not honest with them. The 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer, for example, highlights a “crisis of grievance,” in which large segments of the population feel left behind and are more inclined to distrust complex policy and technology initiatives.[\[2\]](#)

This erosion of trust is particularly dangerous at a time when artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and advanced biotechnologies are central to economic and military competition. A report submitted to Congress by U.S.–China policy experts emphasizes that both countries now treat these technologies as strategic industries, tying them directly to national power and long-term security.[\[4\]](#)

Building Durable Relationships with Legislators

For technology companies, increasing national trust starts with treating Congress as a long-term strategic partner, not simply as an annual budget gatekeeper.[\[4\]](#)

- Institutionalize bipartisan technology engagement: Firms can create recurring, nonpartisan briefings and workshops with relevant committees to explain how artificial intelligence (AI), quantum, cyber, and bio tools affect national resilience, economic competitiveness, and workforce opportunity. By engaging members and staff from both parties, companies reduce the perception that emerging technologies are aligned with a single political faction.[\[5\]](#)
- Lead with ethics, safety, and security: Research on public attitudes toward AI suggests people are more supportive when they see clear safeguards, transparency, and accountability mechanisms within the tech industry. Companies can build trust by proactively presenting their AI safety frameworks, data-protection policies, and supply-chain security measures, aligning them with federal guidance and international norms on responsible technology use.[\[6\]](#)



Securing Sustained Funding for Critical Technology

Trust is reinforced when technology programs are clearly tied to enduring strategic missions and supported through stable, multi-year funding rather than fragile pilots.[\[5\]](#)

- Connect capabilities to mission portfolios: Instead of scattered line items, technology programs can be organized into mission-driven portfolios—such as quantum-resilient communications, AI-enabled national preparedness, or biosecurity infrastructure—that span research, prototyping, and deployment over several years. Multi-year authorizations and appropriations make it harder for any single administration to abruptly cancel essential capabilities.[\[4\]](#)
- Use innovation tools that protect both government and industry: Policy analyses highlight the value of mechanisms like Other Transaction Authority and structured public-private partnerships to bring nontraditional vendors into national security and infrastructure work more quickly. By pairing these tools with clearer intellectual property protections and streamlined oversight, legislators can encourage top-tier tech firms to stay engaged in sensitive missions over the long term.[\[8\]](#)

Embedding Technology in Law, Not Just Budgets

To prevent critical technologies from being swapped out with each political shift, their roles must be written into statute and tied to democratic oversight.[\[9\]](#)

- Statutory roles for key technologies: Laws governing defense planning, critical infrastructure, and economic security should explicitly call for the use of AI, secure digital infrastructure, and advanced analytics in defined mission areas, such as threat detection, disaster response, and supply-chain monitoring. Once these roles are codified, dismantling them requires visible legislative action rather than quiet executive changes.[\[9\]](#)
- Multi-stakeholder governance in legislation: Legislated advisory councils and oversight boards that include government, industry, academia, and civil society should supervise high-impact technologies and publish regular reports. This structure signals that powerful tools are subject to ongoing, pluralistic scrutiny rather than being controlled solely by political appointees or corporate executives.[\[10\]](#)

Quantum Networking Testbed Infrastructure

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) put forth by Congress each year does not typically use a single, generic phrase like “quantum networking testbeds” in isolation; instead, it authorizes and directs specific programs and experiments that collectively constitute quantum networking testbed infrastructure. Several provisions and related authoritative documents are especially relevant to the future of quantum technology growth.



A Senate Armed Services Committee fact sheet on the fiscal year 2024 NDAA highlights language that “authorizes increased funding for a distributed quantum networking testbed” and the development of a next-generation ion-trap quantum computer at the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL). While the fact sheet summarizes rather than reproduces the statutory text, it makes clear that Congress explicitly authorized a distributed quantum networking testbed as part of the defense Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) portfolio.[\[12\]](#)

Within the fiscal year 2025 NDAA, Congress, “authorizes funding to create a ‘quantum communications corridor’ as part of Navy research, development, test, and evaluation.” This is an explicit description of support for a testbed or network to advance quantum communication research so the Navy and the Department of Defense (DoD) can securely transmit information resistant to quantum computer decryption.[\[15\]](#)

Other recent NDAA cycles also include broader direction that reinforces these testbed authorizations, such as requirements for DoD to establish pilot programs for promising quantum computing capabilities and to identify near-term use cases that can be fielded within two years. These provisions do not always use the word “testbed” in the operative clause, but they direct the department to stand up experimental infrastructure and pilots that, in practice, operate as quantum networking and computing testbeds for defense applications.[\[16\]](#)

In parallel, the National Quantum Initiative framework and associated Department of Energy (DOE) efforts describe quantum networking testbeds as shared infrastructure for entanglement distribution and quantum communications, and Congressional action has repeatedly referenced these federal testbeds and network efforts as part of the broader quantum information science ecosystem that the DoD can leverage.[\[13\]](#)

Ensuring key technologies not only protect the nation but are also provided with substantial investment and economic promise is a necessity for companies to further their developmental efforts. Demonstrating that quantum technologies are viable for multiple applications—within internal defense and external partnerships—is one possible solution as tech companies become increasingly concerned with the long-term payoff of their test bed programs. For now, defense authorization bills appear to be the most forward leaning avenue supported by government, but the long-term stability of this method has yet to be validated.

How This Approach Builds Public Trust

When the tech industry engages both parties and chambers in Congress, supports multi-year statutory programs, and accepts meaningful oversight, it demonstrates that emerging technologies are being developed within a framework of law, ethics, and long-term national interest. In such a system, citizens can see that AI, quantum computing, and other advanced capabilities are not partisan experiments or purely profit-driven ventures, but part of a durable national strategy subject to democratic control.[\[2\]](#)

The tech sector can both strengthen U.S. strategic competitiveness and contribute tangibly to rebuilding public trust in government by positioning itself as a co-steward of national resilience,

helping design governance mechanisms, committing to transparency, and working with legislators to hard-wire critical technologies into law and funding.[5]

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