

Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti Warns of AI Risks to Children on the RegulatingAI Podcast with Sanjay Puri

On the RegulatingAI Podcast, Tennessee AG Jonathan Skrmetti urged balanced AI governance, and stronger child protections without stifling innovation.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Artificial intelligence may be the most transformative technology of our era, but according to Tennessee Attorney General [Jonathan Skrmetti](#), it also presents unprecedented risks that demand thoughtful governance. Speaking with host [Sanjay Puri](#) on the [RegulatingAI Podcast](#), presented in partnership with Knowledge Networks, Skrmetti outlined his concerns about AI regulation, child safety, antitrust enforcement, and the growing influence of powerful technology companies. A leading voice in American AI policy, Skrmetti has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that innovation does not come at the expense of consumer protection. During the conversation, he explained why he led a bipartisan coalition of 40 state attorneys general in opposing a proposed federal moratorium that would have prevented states from regulating AI for a decade.

According to Skrmetti, the proposal would have created a dangerous regulatory vacuum at a time when AI technologies are evolving rapidly. While he acknowledged the need for a coherent federal framework, he argued that states currently serve as the primary line of defense against consumer harm. Until comprehensive federal legislation exists, he said, state authorities must retain the ability to enforce consumer protection, privacy, and antitrust laws. The discussion also explored the growing role of AI in antitrust enforcement. Skrmetti highlighted the landmark RealPage case, in which state attorneys general joined the U.S. Department of Justice in alleging that algorithmic pricing tools enabled landlords to coordinate rents without direct



RegulatingAI Podcast



Jonathan Skrmetti, Attorney General of the State of Tennessee with Sanjay Puri, President of RegulatingAI



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Jonathan Skrmetti

communication. He emphasized that technology should not be used to circumvent existing laws, arguing that collusion conducted through algorithms should be treated the same as collusion conducted in person. However, the most urgent part of the conversation focused on children and AI.

Skrmetti warned that AI poses risks that are more

immediate and personal than those associated with previous technologies such as social media. While social media platforms often rely on addictive engagement mechanisms and questionable content, AI systems introduce a new level of personalization. Chatbots can quickly adapt to a user’s emotions, behavior, and vulnerabilities, creating powerful feedback loops that can influence young users in ways that remain poorly understood. “The risk is very personalized and individualized,” Skrmetti explained, noting that children are particularly susceptible to emotional responses generated through AI interactions. He cited cases where chatbots allegedly amplified harmful behaviors, including self-harm and violence, by reinforcing negative thought patterns.

The Tennessee Attorney General also discussed concerns about AI companies deploying products without sufficient safeguards. Referencing inquiries into chatbot interactions involving minors, he stressed that companies must adopt stronger internal guardrails and exercise a duty of care when designing AI systems that may be accessed by children. Despite these concerns, Skrmetti rejected calls for blanket restrictions on AI. Instead, he advocated for balanced governance that preserves innovation while protecting vulnerable users. He pointed to promising applications such as AI tutors, educational tools, and therapeutic chatbots that could provide meaningful benefits when properly designed and monitored.

Looking ahead, Skrmetti identified “emotional AI” as one of the most significant governance challenges on the horizon. He expressed concern about systems capable of analyzing personal histories, behavioral patterns, facial expressions, and other data points to influence human decisions and emotions. Such capabilities, he warned, could affect everything from consumer behavior to democratic processes. Throughout the interview, Skrmetti repeatedly emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and collaboration between regulators and technology companies. Rather than prescribing how AI systems should be built, he argued that policymakers should focus on outcomes, ensuring that companies are held responsible when their products cause harm.

As AI adoption accelerates across industries, Skrmetti’s message on the RegulatingAI Podcast was clear: innovation and safety must advance together. Protecting consumers—especially children—while fostering technological progress will require cooperation among lawmakers, regulators, and industry leaders in the years ahead.

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