

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) systems are rapidly transforming finance, healthcare, education, defense, and information. To balance these rewards and risks, both advocates and critics of AI have urged the U.S. federal government to adopt **AI policy**—rules, regulations, and guidelines that govern the development, deployment, and use of AI systems.

Who shapes AI policy? How do AI companies use public comments, Congressional testimony, campaign contributions, educational meetings, etc., to influence federal policy? I map key actors, frameworks, and processes which comprise the **AI ecosystem**. Using public data, I track lobbying meetings and expenditures. I find evidence of **strong industry influence** throughout the Action Plan. Ultimately, my research uncovers how AI policy is made.

Data

I use two main sources of data. To track lobbying meetings and expenditures, I use financial data from **OpenSecrets**, a research group which compiles information on money in politics. I also analyze responses to various Requests for Information (RFIs) filed by executive agencies. In total, my dataset comprises **36 public comments** from AI companies regarding different proposed federal regulations.

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Fig. 1

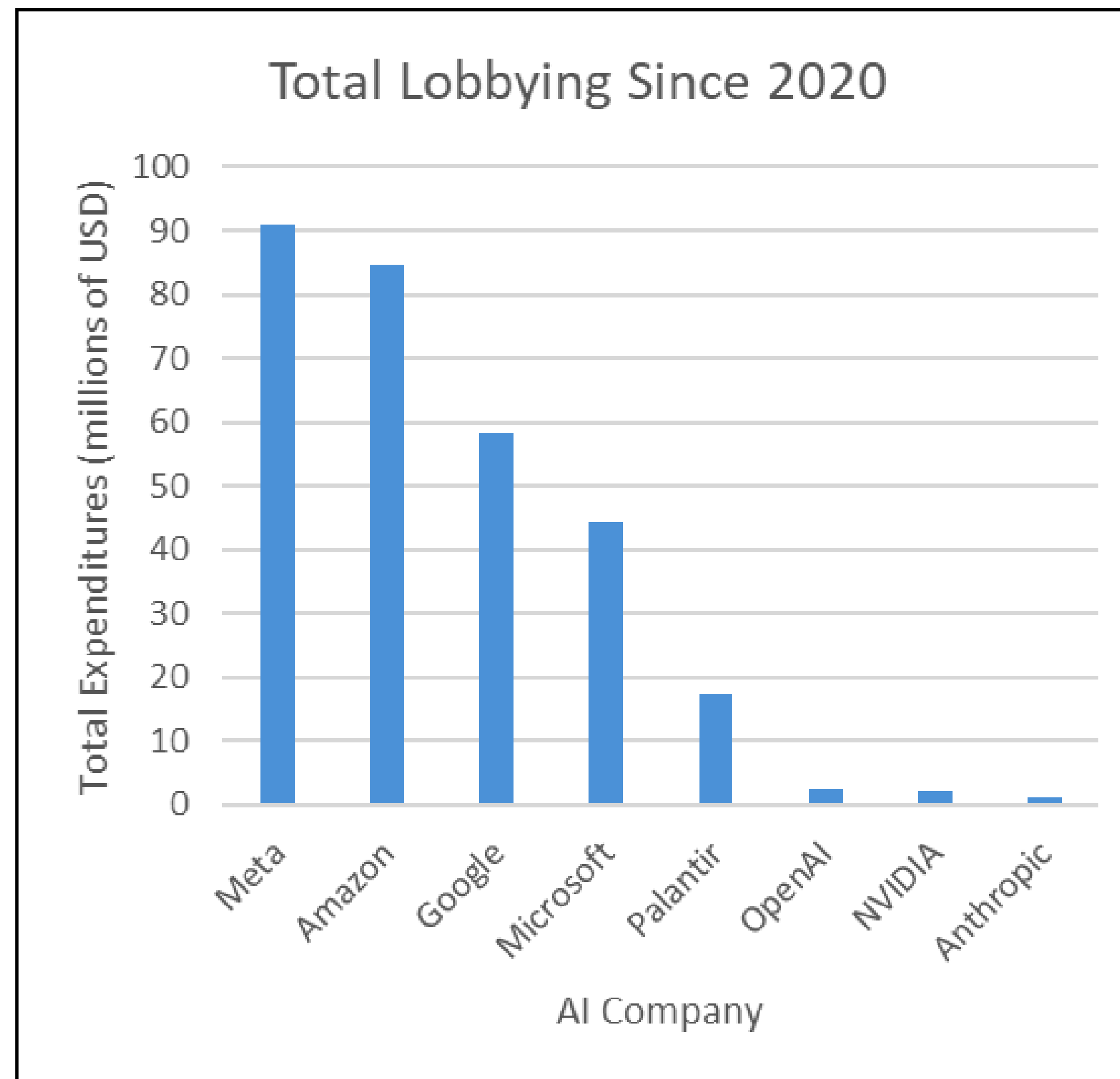


Fig. 2

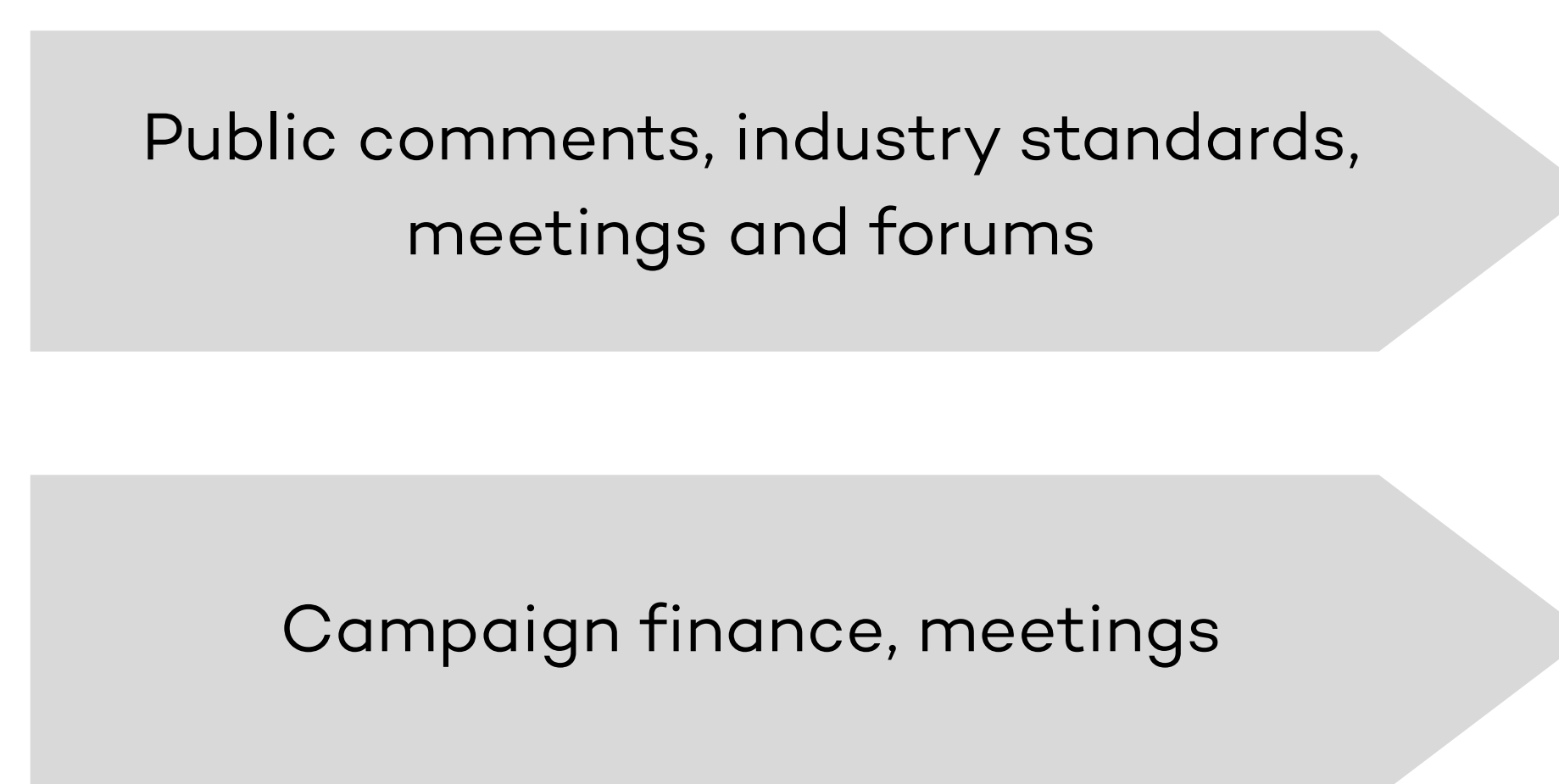


Fig. 3

	All Bills	AI-related bills	AI-related reports/issues
Amazon	108	7	24
Anthropic	4	4	8
Google	103	22	60
Meta	43	11	38
Microsoft	126	30	124
NVIDIA	1	1	2
OpenAI	9	9	31
Palantir	7	0	0
Total	401	84	287



Lobbying

Since 2020, **Meta** has spent the most money on lobbying the federal gov. (\$90.9 million), followed respectively by Amazon (\$84.5 million), Google (\$58.2 million), Microsoft (\$44.2 million), Palantir (\$17.3 million), OpenAI (\$2.6 million), NVIDIA (\$2.2 million), and Anthropic (\$1.4 million). (Fig. 1)

To measure “AI-related” lobbying activity, I filter the OpenSecrets data for bills which mention artificial intelligence, AI, algorithms, or deepfakes in the title. Of the 401 bills and resolutions these companies lobbied in 2024, **84 (20.9%) were “AI-related.”** On those bills and resolutions, companies filed an aggregate 287 lobbying reports. (Fig. 3)

Microsoft lobbied for the most AI-related bills and resolutions (30), followed by Google (22), Meta (11), and OpenAI (9). Microsoft also filed the most AI-related LDA reports (124), followed by Google (60), Meta (38), and OpenAI (31). Notably, while every other top AI company filed between 2–3.44 reports per AI-related legislation, Microsoft displayed a much **higher rate of 4.13**.

OpenAI, Anthropic, and NVIDIA lobbied exclusively on AI-related legislation. Roughly one fourth of Microsoft, Meta, and Google’s lobbying efforts focused on AI-related legislation. Less than a tenth of Amazon’s lobbying was AI-related, and Palantir did not lobby for any AI-related legislation.

AI Action Plan

I—Remove Red Tape and Onerous Regulation
Microsoft argues that regulatory fragmentation diverts resources from innovation to compliance. Both Amazon and Google explicitly advocate for federal preemption of what they describe as a “patchwork of [state-level] laws.”

I—Open-Source and Open-Weight AI
Of the top AI companies, only Meta advocates for prioritizing open-source models. The bulk of their comment argues that “Meta has been at the forefront of open source for over a decade,” emphasizing the benefits to national security, efficiency, and innovation.

III—Strengthen Export Control Enforcement
Google, OpenAI, and Meta all advocate *against* it. Google argues that export controls designed under the Biden administration’s Diffusion Rule were unduly restrictive and onerous. OpenAI proposes a modification to the Rule which would “expand the number of countries in Tier I,” substantially reducing the breadth of export controls. And Meta advocates for exempting open-source models from export controls.

Conclusion

AI policy in the United States is driven by interactions between key federal science agencies and top AI companies. AI companies strategically use several lobbying tactics to insert their priorities into policymaking processes in Congress and the executive branch. **AI companies are not monolithic** in their tactics or their preferences. (Fig. 2)

All of these findings are evident within the Trump administration’s AI Action Plan. **The Plan heavily reflected industry preferences** in a number of consequential domains. It also even adopted some specific policy recommendations made by AI companies, demonstrating the impact of industry influence on federal AI policy. However, industry priorities are sometimes overridden by other interests such as national security. Ultimately, more research is needed to uncover the specific channels and methods AI companies use to influence federal policy.

1 OpenSecrets, “OpenSecrets,” accessed August 13, 2025, <https://www.opensecrets.org/>
2 America’s AI Action Plan, 2025, The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Americas-AI-Action-Plan.pdf>
3 Microsoft, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, 10, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/Microsoft-AI-RFI-2025.pdf>
4 Amazon, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/Amazon-AI-RFI-2025.pdf>
5 OpenAI, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/OpenAI-RFI-2025.pdf>
6 Anthropic, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/Anthropic-AI-RFI-2025.pdf>
7 Meta, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/Meta-AI-RFI-2025.pdf>
8 Google, “Comments Received in Response to Request for Information on the Development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Action Plan,” 2025, <https://files.nitrd.gov/PO-fr-9088/Google-RFI-2025.pdf>