THE DATA SAVINGS ACT

A Proposal to the Congress and the President of the United States

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Submitted in support of the Declaration for a Data Savings Act, signed by [N] citizens of the United States and endorsed by [N] organizations on ***SignTheAct.DataReserve.org***

Addressed to:

The Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Majority Leader of the United States Senate

The Minority Leader of the United States Senate

The Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives

The Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Finance, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the House Committee on Ways and Means, and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

With copies to:

The President of the United States

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Director of the National Economic Council

The Chair of the Federal Trade Commission

July 4, 2026

To the Congress and the President of the United States:

We have signed a Declaration calling for a Data Savings Act. This proposal sets out, in greater detail, what we believe such an Act should contain and how we believe it should be built.

We do not approach you as petitioners seeking favor. We approach you as citizens proposing an institutional change. The change we propose is the recognition, in federal law, of data as a compounding asset that can be saved, owned, and monetized by the people who generate it.

Earlier American eras met economic disruption with similar acts of public imagination. Pensions transformed industrial labor into long-term ownership. Social Security transformed the Great Depression into a lasting structure of retirement security. The GI Bill transformed postwar uncertainty into a generation of educational and economic mobility. Each of these moments answered a structural shock by recognizing a class of contribution that had not previously been recognized in law, and by building the legal protections that turned that contribution into compounding wealth for ordinary Americans.

The AI economy is the structural shock of our time. Its benefits are real. Its disruptions are real. What is missing is the recognition that the data Americans generate has economic value, and the legal architecture that returns that value to the people who create it.

The proposal that follows describes what that change could look like. It is not a finished bill. It is the architectural sketch of a bill, a description of the principles, the components, and the pathway by which Congress, working with the executive branch, could build something equal to the moment.

We ask that you read it in that spirit, and that you take up the work it describes.

Respectfully submitted,

The signatories of the Declaration for a Data Savings Act

[N citizens, N organizations]

Executive Summary

Summary. The Data Savings Act would establish a federal framework recognizing the economic value of data generated by individuals, and creating personal Data Savings Accounts through which Americans can hold, accumulate, and benefit from that value. The Act would draw on the institutional traditions of American retirement security, including durable, portable, legally protected accounts owned by individuals, adapted for an economy in which data, rather than industrial labor alone, is a foundational input.

Why now. AI systems are reshaping work, wages, and economic participation faster than the institutional structures of the American middle class can absorb. Data generated by individuals is the primary raw material of these systems. That value is currently captured at scale by platforms, with no compensating mechanism returning value to the people who generate it. State level efforts to address this, in California, Colorado, Connecticut, and elsewhere, have produced a fragmented patchwork. Federal action is overdue, and the window for shaping it constructively, rather than reactively, is open now.

Three core elements. The Act, as we propose it, would do three things:

1. Recognize, in federal law, that data generated by individuals is a compounding asset attributable to those individuals.
2. Establish a national framework of personal Data Savings Accounts, with legal protections analogous to those afforded to retirement accounts.

What this proposal is not. This is not a privacy regulation. It is not a tax. It is not a redistribution program. It is the recognition of a new asset class and the establishment of a new savings institution. The closest American historical analogues are the creation of pension systems and the codification of retirement savings, institutions that built ownership stakes for ordinary Americans in economies they helped power.

What we ask. We ask the Congress to take up the drafting of a Data Savings Act, in consultation with the executive branch, with the goal of recognition in this Congress, pilots in the next, and permanent enactment within the following two years. We ask the President to direct the Treasury, the FTC, and the National Economic Council to begin the technical and regulatory groundwork that would support such legislation.

I. The Case

A. The historical pattern

American economic institutions have been built, repeatedly, in response to disruption. Industrialization concentrated wealth among owners of capital, and was answered, over decades, by the construction of pensions, labor protections, and the institutional architecture of the Treaty of Detroit and the broader postwar compact. The Great Depression destroyed retirement security for a generation, and was answered by Social Security. The return of millions of veterans threatened to overwhelm the postwar economy, and was answered by the GI Bill. In each case,

the response was not a transfer payment. It was an act of recognition, a durable structure that turned the disruption into a foundation for broad participation.

These responses had common features. They recognized a class of contribution that was not yet recognized in law, including industrial labor as deserving of retirement, and military service as deserving of educational investment. They created accounts or entitlements held in the name of the individual. They protected those accounts in law against arbitrary loss. And they built into themselves the expectation of compounding, that contributions made today would grow into ownership tomorrow.

The AI economy presents a comparable disruption and lacks a comparable recognition.

B. The economic foundation

The data generated by individuals, through employment, healthcare, communication, commerce, transportation, and the routine activity of digital life, is the primary input to the AI systems now reshaping the American economy. This is not a contested claim. It is the operating premise of the AI industry itself.

What is contested is what should follow from that fact. The current default is that the value generated from this data is captured by the platforms that aggregate it, with no compensating return to the individuals who produce it. This is not the result of a deliberate policy choice. It is the absence of one. There has been no moment at which Congress decided that data generated by individuals should be treated, in law, as the property of the platforms that collect it. There has simply been no moment at which Congress decided otherwise.

The Data Savings Act would be that moment.

C. What recognition changes

The first and most consequential act of the proposed legislation is recognition, a statutory acknowledgment that data generated by individuals is a compounding asset that can be saved, owned, and monetized by those individuals. This recognition is consequential even before any specific mechanism is built on top of it. It changes the default. It establishes a legal premise from which mechanisms, including accounts, plans, valuation methods, and dispute resolution, can be developed by Congress, by agencies, and by the markets the Act would shape.

The Act, as we propose it, begins with recognition and builds the mechanism on it.

II. The Proposed Framework

The Data Savings Act, as we propose, would establish three institutional components and four core protections. We describe them here at the level of architecture, not statutory text. Statutory text is the work of legislative drafters in the chambers of jurisdiction, working with the executive agencies that will implement the resulting law.

A. The three components

1. Personal Data Savings Accounts. *The foundational unit of the framework.* A personal account, held in the name of an individual American, into which value attributable to that individual's data is contributed and accumulated. Accounts are owned by the individual, portable across employers and platforms, and protected in law against arbitrary loss. The architectural reference points are the personal retirement account and the Social Security account, instruments familiar to every American, with established legal traditions of individual ownership and federal protection.

2. Data Savings Plans. *The administrative structures under which Accounts are held and managed*. Plans may be sponsored by employers, by platforms, by states, by federal agencies, or by independent administrators authorized under the Act. Plans are subject to fiduciary standards, transparency requirements, and federal oversight. The architectural reference is the employer sponsored retirement plan, a familiar institutional form that has scaled to cover tens of millions of Americans without requiring direct federal administration of every account.

3. Authorized Data Administrators. *The licensed entities permitted to operate Plans and to perform the technical functions required to attribute, value, and credit data contributions to Accounts.* Administrators are subject to federal licensing standards, periodic audit, and removal for cause. The architectural reference is the regulated plan administrator, a category of licensed intermediary with established standards for fiduciary conduct.

B. The four core protections

1. Ownership. Account holders own the value held in their Accounts. Because relationships generate data, both sides of the relationship have an ownership interest in the data they produce.

2. Portability. Account holders may move their accounts between Plans without loss of accrued value. The institutional traditions on which this framework draws, including retirement, healthcare, and banking, have all been strengthened by portability, and weakened by its absence.

3. Transparency. Account holders have a legal right to know what data is being contributed on their behalf, what value is being attributed to it, how that valuation is determined, and how value is being distributed. The Act would establish federal standards for this reporting, and federal recourse where standards are not met.

4. Voluntariness. Participation in any Data Savings Plan is voluntary, revocable, and protected against retaliation. No American is required to participate. No American who does participate may be penalized in employment, in service access, or in any other domain for exercising their rights under the Act.

C. What the framework does not address, and why that is a feature

This proposal does not specify a single funding mechanism. There are several plausible candidates, including direct contributions from platforms based on data utilization, a federal contribution structure analogous to existing tax advantaged savings, a portion of the value generated by AI applications trained on contributed data, or hybrid approaches. We do not propose to choose among them in this document. The choice of funding mechanism is a question of legislative and regulatory design and does not specify a single valuation methodology. How to value a particular individual's data contribution is a hard problem with multiple credible

approaches. Pilot programs are the right setting in which to develop, compare, and refine valuation methods. Locking a methodology into statute before that work is done would be a mistake.

What the Act must do is establish the foundation, including the recognition, the accounts, and the protections, within which these technical questions can be worked out responsibly. The history of American institution building suggests that getting the foundation right matters more than getting every parameter right at the start.

III. Implementation

We propose a phased approach to implementation. The phases are not fixed timelines. They are sequenced workstreams that can move at the pace Congress and the executive branch find appropriate. What matters is the sequence, not the calendar.

First, recognition. Congressional acknowledgment, in legislation or in committee resolution, that data generated by individuals is a compounding asset attributable to those individuals. This step has independent value even before any further mechanism is built.

Second, executive groundwork. The Treasury, in coordination with the FTC and the National Economic Council, undertakes the technical and regulatory groundwork necessary to support the framework. This includes preliminary standards for data attribution and provenance, framework design for pilot programs, and consultation with state level efforts already underway.

Third, pilot authorization. Congress authorizes a set of pilot programs, open to competitive selection by states and federal vehicles. Pilots prioritize populations for whom the disruption is most acute and the data trails most legible, including gig economy workers, healthcare data contributors, and financially underserved populations. No single state or vehicle should be pre designated. The most credible pilots will emerge from competitive proposals.

Fourth, refinement and enactment. Pilot results inform the drafting of the permanent statutory framework. The Act, in its enacted form, reflects what was learned in pilots, including what valuation methods worked, what administrative structures scaled, and what protections proved necessary in practice.

Fifth, broad adoption. The enacted framework is rolled out nationally, integrated with existing employment, benefits, and savings infrastructure, and refined over time through the ordinary processes of agency rulemaking and congressional oversight.

This is a multi year effort. We propose that it begin now.

IV. The Strategic Stakes

The strongest argument for the Data Savings Act is not technical. It is institutional and historical.

America has, twice in the last century, faced economic transformations that threatened to leave most Americans on the wrong side of the new economy. Twice, America responded by recognizing a class of contribution that had not previously been recognized, and by building the legal architecture that turned that contribution into compounding ownership. Pensions did this. Social Security did this. The GI Bill did this. In each case, the political work was hard, the design was contested, and the result was the foundation of a generation's prosperity.

The AI economy is the third such transformation. The choice before this Congress, and the next, is whether to make the recognition this transformation requires, or to leave it unmade.

Leaving it unmade is itself a choice. It is the choice to allow the value generated by hundreds of millions of Americans to be captured by the platforms that aggregate it, with no compensating return. It is the choice to allow the AI economy to harden into a structure in which most Americans are inputs rather than stakeholders. That choice is being made, by default, every day that the Congress does not act.

We are asking the Congress to make a different choice.

We are asking for the recognition this century requires. Every citizen an owner. Every contribution an asset. Every American a stakeholder in the economy we are building together.

V. The Ask

We ask the Congress of the United States to:

1. Take up, in this Congress or the next, the drafting of a Data Savings Act consistent with the architectural principles set out in this Proposal.
2. Hold hearings, in committees of jurisdiction, on the recognition of individual data as a source of economic value and on the institutional structures appropriate to that recognition.
3. Authorize pilot programs through which the framework can be tested, refined, and scaled.

We ask the President of the United States to:

1. Direct the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the National Economic Council, and the Chair of the Federal Trade Commission to begin the technical and regulatory groundwork that would support the legislation described in this Proposal.
2. Convene the relevant agencies and external experts in a working group on data as an asset class and the legal structures appropriate to it.
3. Communicate publicly the Administration's recognition that the AI economy requires a new act of public imagination, and its willingness to work with the Congress to deliver it.

VI. Closing

The institutions that built the American middle class were not inevitable. They were chosen. Each was the product of a moment in which Americans, and the leaders they elected, decided that an economy worth living in required structures equal to its ambitions.

This is such a moment.

We have signed our names to the Declaration. We submit this Proposal in support of it. We ask the Congress and the President to do their part of the work that we, as citizens, cannot do alone, to take up, draft, debate, and enact a Data Savings Act for the country we are becoming.

Respectfully submitted,

The signatories of the Declaration for a Data Savings Act

[N citizens, N organizations]