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SIDNER: A new bipartisan bill in the Senate wants employers to be very clear about how many American jobs are being lost to artificial intelligence. I'm sure you want to know the answer to that. Missouri Senator Josh Hawley said, and I'm quoting here, "The American people need to have an accurate understanding of how A.I. is affecting our workforce, so we can ensure that A.I. works for the people, not the other way around."

The bill, introduced by the Missouri Republican and Virginia Democrat, Senator Mark Warner, would require large companies and government agencies to report A.I. related job impacts every three months. That could be new hires, layoffs, or job displacements. The Labor Department would then add up those changes and make them all public.

We're joined now by Darrell West, senior fellow with the Brookings Institute and an expert on artificial intelligence, robotics and the future of work. Thank you for being here. This is a subject that so many people are worried about, are looking at and wondering if their job is at risk. We've heard of a lot of layoffs recently that have to do with A.I. but how much is A.I. to blame at this point for what we're seeing in the job market?

DARRELL WEST, SENIOR FELLOW, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION: Well, Sara, we are seeing A.I. related job losses already take place. So certainly in terms of entry level jobs, anything that is routine or administrative already can be automated and actually is being automated. But it's not just entry level jobs. There are more white collar jobs and professional jobs that are being affected by A.I. and automation.

For example, A.I. can now read x-rays and CAT scans with a high degree of accuracy. So radiologists, you would think that would be an occupation that would be immune from A.I., it actually is not. We're seeing a lot of A.I. come into finance, transportation and many other areas, so I applaud those senators for introducing that bill. We need more information about exactly what the job impact is.

SIDNER: I do want to ask you, just on a larger scale, are we going to see something like what happened to blue-collar workers when manufacturing jobs left places like Detroit? When it comes to white-collar workers who are going to see A.I. come in and sort of decimate some of the things like going into law firms, those entry level jobs, looking up like you just talked about, looking at, you know, charts and those sorts of things that a computer can do sometimes even quicker and better than we can as humans. are we going to see a huge mass change here?

WEST: We are certainly going to see a change in some of those professional occupations. I mean, just take the legal area. I mean, what do lawyers do? A lot of what lawyers do is somebody comes with a complaint. Lawyers do research. They look at past cases, see what might be relevant for them. A.I. can do that. A.I. is actually really good at reviewing past legal cases, undertaking a literature review and so on.

Like in my own area of education, what do academics do? You know, we analyze information, we conduct literature reviews, we analyze data. Those are all things that A.I. can do. So I do think that it's not just going to be a problem of entry level positions, but some of these higher level professional and white-collar jobs that one might think would be immune to automation actually are not likely to be.

SIDNER: You know, it's fascinating. Are there specific jobs that you right now look at and go, if I was a kid going to college, I would not be studying that? That's going to go away. What are you seeing?

WEST: Well, the funny thing is, you know, five or 10 years ago, people were always saying, oh, you need to learn how to code. Like, you would think that software design, software coding, you would be immune.

SIDNER: Right.

WEST: But, you know, the tech companies have announced a lot of layoffs over the last few months, and several of them themselves have pointed out that one-third or more of the people they have laid off basically are software engineers and software coders, and they specifically cited A.I. as the reason for those layoffs. So, you know, that's a job that one might think would be safe, but no longer is.

The transportation area like autonomous vehicles are starting to appear in major American cities. And so probably a little bit more down the road, taxi drivers and ride-sharing service drivers are going to be at risk. So A.I. is really going to affect a lot of different sectors.

SIDNER: Yes, a lot of different things. And some things that we can't see yet because we don't know just how good A.I. is going to become. But it's certainly becoming very good at certain things very quickly. I do want to sort of ask you just kind of on a broad spectrum, how important is it that there is governance of this? I mean, for a long time, people have been asking the government to try and sort of deal with and regulate social media, which it really hasn't yet. How important is it for the government to get involved now when it comes to A.I.?

WEST: We certainly need better guardrails in place. We need better transparency about how these algorithms operate, what kind of decisions they're making, the kind of data they're using. We need to think about the impact on personal privacy and cybersecurity because those things are at risk. I mean, every day there's a big increase in consumer fraud and scams that are taking place.

So government does have a role to protect consumers. That is a classic role of government. We also need to improve our job retraining situation. I mean, there are going to be new types of jobs that are created as well. But there's a question as to whether the people being laid off due to A.I. will have the skills needed to qualify for those new jobs. So job retraining is something that both the public and private sectors need to take more seriously.

SIDNER: Yes, those are really good points, but I have to say it is scary sort of talking through all the possibilities that A.I. can just replace us and do it, you know, better and faster and cheaper, which is what companies are looking for. Darrell West, I do appreciate you looking into this and keeping tabs on it. We'll be checking back in with you, I'm sure, over the next few months and years.