

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

Nominations Hearing
Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

REPUBLICAN QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

COVER PAGE
Ms. Oz

SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN (R-TN)

1. In your role as Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology, you will be tasked with overseeing the University Transportation Center program. UT Knoxville is home to one of these UTCs, focusing on improving freight transportation to ensure efficient and resilient supply chains. UTK is at the forefront of transportation innovation, please explain how you plan to partner with universities and other stakeholders outside of the Department of Transportation to ensure that the United States remains at the forefront of innovation in transportation, supply chain resiliency, and logistics?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the UTCs on their important work in improving freight transportation, supply chain resiliency and logistics. I recognize that UTCs play a key role in transportation research.

2. I have focused on for years the right sizing the federal government and ensuring that taxpayer dollars are going towards worthwhile, applicable research. I have been pleased that President Trump and Secretary Duffy share this concern for the smart allocation of taxpayer funds. How do you plan to ensure that federal dollars are spent on worthwhile research, retaining the partnerships that keep us at the forefront of innovation and technological advancement?

The role in which I am nominated to serve focuses on research for the Department and does not have a decision in the spending of federal dollars.

3. We often hear that the patent process is broken, especially when it comes to critical and emerging technologies. China is working to surpass the United States in this field, leading the world in 57 of 64 critical technologies. That's why I introduced the *Leadership in Critical and Emerging Technologies Act*, which would require the USPTO to establish a pilot program to expedite the examination of 15,000 patent applications for certain critical and emerging technologies. Can you describe your experience patenting autonomous technologies and what barriers exist for innovators in this arena?

While working at Continental, my team and I filed multiple patents, which was an expensive and labor-intensive process.

China has capitalized our slow patent system to quickly file similar patents in other venues, essentially copying or stealing our innovations. If confirmed, I will work with the Senate Commerce Committee to fix this problem.

4. In your new role, you will coordinate with modal agencies on autonomous vehicle research and adoption. It is critically important to our competition with China for technological dominance that the United States get this right. Please explain how you will apply your experience to your new role, ensuring that the United States is the world leader in the technology of the future.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the modal agencies, such as NHTSA, to ensure the safety, efficiency, and reliability of advanced systems to improve the United States' competitive edge.

5. What specific advantages does China have over the United States in autonomous technology, and how will you work to mitigate those in your role as Assistant Secretary?

The Chinese government has promoted a national framework for the acceleration of automated vehicles (AVs) across their metropolitan cities that also fueled commercialization of the robo-taxi and passenger vehicle industry.

If confirmed, I plan to advise the Secretary and inform DOT's regulatory framework on the safest and most advanced research and technical knowledge to promote the safe deployment for advanced technologies.

SENATOR BERNIE MORENO (R-OH)

I. Preserving Individual Car Ownership

1. Ms. Oz, private car ownership is a foundational American value. In your view, can the future of autonomous vehicles coexist with widespread private vehicle ownership, and do you support or anticipate recommending any policies that would directly or indirectly limit the right to own a personal vehicle?

Yes, these vehicles will co-exist as different communities will have different needs and demands. No, I absolutely will not recommend, nor do I support any policies to limit vehicle ownership.

2. Do you foresee a future in which AV fleets displace or restrict access to personally owned vehicles? If so, what would the impact be—particularly on rural and underserved communities that rely on car ownership?

No, I do not foresee AV fleets displacing or restricting access to personally owned vehicles. If AV fleets exist in the future, it would be in response to a demand most likely in specific geographical locations.

3. Would you support a temporary suspension of AV technologies that do not have a human driver in the vehicle for five years?

If confirmed, I would lead the Department's research efforts in advanced technology to ensure the safety and reliability of these systems. NHTSA, not OST-R, is responsible for such decisions. I will follow all the laws of Congress and the policies of the Department of Transportation as set by the President and the Secretary.

II. Cost Impacts and Federal Mandates

1. In your testimony, you spoke about the life-saving potential of AVs. What measures are being taken to ensure that AV adoption does not increase the cost of vehicles for working Americans who may neither want nor need these technologies?

If confirmed, I would lead the Department's research efforts in advanced technology to ensure the safety and reliability of these systems. The Office of Research and Technology does not make these decisions about which technologies to include in cars. However, I support vehicle choice and strongly support private ownership of vehicles.

2. Do you believe DOT should be prohibited from mandating that all new vehicles include AV technologies, especially if such mandates would price millions of Americans out of the new car market?

If confirmed, I would lead the Department's research efforts in advanced technology to ensure the safety and reliability of these systems. The Office of Research and Technology does not make these decisions. However, I support vehicle choice, strongly support private ownership of vehicles, and support affordability. The Congress, the President, and the Secretary make these choices.

III. Data Privacy and Big Tech

1. How can we prevent AV manufacturers, many of which are large technology companies, from collecting, storing, or selling personally identifiable location and behavioral data from vehicles?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure strong, updated data encryption privacy and cybersecurity is part of our AV framework.

2. What safeguards should be put in place to prevent government agencies or corporations from using AV data for surveillance, profiling, or commercial exploitation?

Strong AV data encryption can prevent unauthorized actors from monitoring the movement of our vehicles and people. If confirmed, I will work with the Senate Commerce committee to analyze proposals to update and reinforce encryption safeguards.

IV. Market Competition and Centralized Control

1. What would you say to concerns that the current AV policy landscape favors large, centralized fleets controlled by corporations or governments—at the expense of competition and private ownership?

If confirmed, I would work to inform AV policy that supports innovation while supporting and preserving private ownership.

2. What policies are necessary to ensure a competitive marketplace that prevents monopolistic control of the AV ecosystem by a few dominant players in the tech or transportation sectors?

If confirmed, I would lead the Department's research efforts in advanced technology to ensure the safety and reliability of these systems. The Office of Research and Technology does not make these decisions. However, I strongly support vehicle choice and private ownership of vehicles.