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**Governor Newsom Vetoes Landmark AI Regulation Bill in California**

In a significant decision for the burgeoning technology sector, California Governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed a groundbreaking bill aimed at instituting first-of-its-kind safety regulations for large artificial intelligence models. The decision, announced on Sunday, represents a setback for proponents who argue that rapidly advancing AI technologies require stringent oversight to mitigate potential risks.

The bill, known as SB 1047, sought to mandate companies developing large-scale AI models to implement safety protocols, including testing and public disclosures to prevent misuse, such as compromising the state’s electric grid or creating chemical weapons. The proposed legislation also aimed to protect whistleblowers who might expose safety violations or malpractices.

Supporters of the bill, including Democratic state Senator Scott Weiner, who authored the legislation, expressed disappointment with the veto. Weiner stressed that the bill was critical for ensuring that massive corporations developing advanced AI systems are held accountable for their decisions impacting public welfare and safety.

“The companies developing advanced AI systems acknowledge that the risks these models present to the public are real and rapidly increasing. While the large AI labs have made admirable commitments to monitor and mitigate these risks, the truth is that voluntary commitments from industry are not enforceable and rarely work out well for the public,” stated Wiener in response to the governor's decision.

Governor Newsom’s veto came after significant opposition from various quarters, including startups, major tech companies, and several Democratic House members. Critics argued that the bill could stifle innovation and harm the state’s homegrown AI industry by imposing rigid requirements indiscriminately on all systems, irrespective of their deployment context. In making his decision, Newsom highlighted these concerns, asserting that the bill did not effectively differentiate between high-risk and low-risk AI systems.

“While well-intentioned, SB 1047 does not take into account whether an AI system is deployed in high-risk environments, involves critical decision-making or the use of sensitive data. Instead, the bill applies stringent standards to even the most basic functions — so long as a large system deploys it. I do not believe this is the best approach to protecting the public from real threats posed by the technology,” Newsom explained.

Rather than implementing the regulations proposed in the bill, Newsom announced a collaborative initiative with industry experts to develop appropriate guardrails for powerful AI models. One such expert is Fei-Fei Li, a pioneer in AI, who opposed the initial bill.

The veto has broader implications as it marks another victory for the tech and AI sectors in California, who have been actively lobbying against stringent regulatory measures. While the bill's demise is a win for them, it leaves open the question of how to effectively balance innovation with public safety concerns.

Proponents of the bill included notable figures like Elon Musk and AI safety company Anthropic. They argued that the legislation could have introduced much-needed transparency and accountability as the industry scales up investments significantly. Daniel Kokotajlo, a former researcher at OpenAI who resigned over concerns about AI risks, noted the immense investment required for developing AI models, suggesting that uncontrolled development could pose significant risks.

In light of federal inactivity on AI regulation, some viewed the California proposal as a potential blueprint for national standards. By requiring developers to adhere to similar safeguards as those voluntarily agreed upon by AI companies under White House guidelines, the bill aimed to establish a preliminary regulatory framework.

Governor Newsom has emphasized California's role as an incubator for AI innovation, underscoring the state’s global leadership with 32 of the world's top 50 AI companies headquartered there. He has promoted the use of generative AI tools across various state initiatives, including tackling highway congestion, providing tax guidance, and addressing homelessness.

Additionally, in a bid to prepare the workforce for AI advancements, California announced a partnership with AI giant Nvidia to offer training for students, college faculty, developers, and data scientists.

Despite the veto, the conversation around AI safety regulations is expected to persist, with lawmakers in other states likely drawing inspiration from California’s legislative efforts.

As the field of AI continues to advance rapidly, the tension between promoting innovation and ensuring public welfare remains a critical issue for policymakers and industry leaders to navigate.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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