The Legal Landscape of Autonomous Vehicles

Wednesday, Aug. 9
11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Session Description: Bryant Walker Smith, a nationally recognized expert on autonomous vehicles, will share his insight on the existing legal framework, legislative trends and how laws may need to change to address this technology. Hear from legislative and industry respondents on how they perceive the fast-moving technological climate and requisite policy changes needed.

Speaker Biographies:

Bryant Walker Smith is an assistant professor in the School of Law and (by courtesy) in the School of Engineering at the University of South Carolina. He is also an affiliate scholar at the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School, an adjunct clinical professor at the University of Michigan Law School, a member of the US Department of Transportation's Advisory Committee on Automation in Transportation, the chair of the Emerging Technology Law Committee of the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, the reporter to the Uniform Law Commission's Study Committee on State Regulation of Driverless Cars, the chair of the Planning Task Force for the On-Road Automated Vehicle Standards Committee of the Society of Automotive and Aerospace Engineers, a faculty affiliate of the Rule of Law Collaborative, and a member of the New York Bar.

Bryant's research focuses on risk (particularly tort law and product liability), technology (automation and connectivity), and mobility (safety and regulation). As an internationally recognized expert on the law of self-driving vehicles, Bryant taught the first-ever course on this topic and is regularly consulted by government, industry, and media. His publications are available at newlypossible.org.

Before joining the University of South Carolina, Bryant led the legal aspects of automated driving program at Stanford University, clerked for the Hon. Evan J. Wallach at the United States Court of International Trade, and worked as a fellow at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. He holds both an LL.M. in International Legal Studies and a J.D. (cum laude) from New York University School of Law and a B.S. in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin. Prior to his legal career, Bryant worked as a transportation engineer.

Representative William Straus serves in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, representing the 10th Bristol District. He has been a member of the House since 1993 and serves as chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. Chairman Straus is a practicing attorney with a general civil litigation practice in New Bedford, Massachusetts.
Prior to joining the legislature, he served as an aide to U.S. Senator John Culver for two years, spent five years as an assistant district attorney in Bristol County and was a member of the Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Facility Site Safety Council and the Conservation Commission for the town of Mattapoisett. Chairman Straus has been a practicing attorney since 1982.

Chairman Straus received his Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center and his Mid-Career Master in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. He is an adjunct professor of law at Boston University.

Representative Robert Spendlove proudly serves in the Utah House of Representatives, where he was elected in 2014. He represents District 49 in the Legislature, covering parts of Sandy and Cottonwood Heights cities. He is the House Vice Chair of the Public Education Appropriations Committee and serves on the Health and Human Services Committee, and the Transportation Committee.

Professionally, Representative Spendlove is a senior vice president and the economic and public policy officer for Zions Bank. In this capacity he monitors and reports on economic indicators and public policy developments for the bank.

Representative Spendlove serves on a number of boards and commissions, including the Utah Economic Council, the Utah International Relations and Trade Commission, Envision Utah, and the US Senate Advisory Committee on Hispanic Affairs for Financial Literacy.

His experience includes time as the governor’s deputy chief of staff for federal relations, the governor’s chief economist and the state demographer He served as the chair of the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisers, and president of the Wasatch Front Economic Forum.

Representative Spendlove received a Master’s of Public Administration with an emphasis in economic public policy at the University of Utah, where he is an adjunct instructor of public policy. He is married and the father of four children.

Hilary Cain is director of technology and innovation policy for Toyota. In this position, Hilary handles policy issues relating to connected and automated vehicles. Prior to joining Toyota, Hilary was on the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. She served as staff director of the Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation with jurisdiction over competitiveness, technology, standards, and innovation. Hilary holds a J.D. and a M.A. in public affairs from the University of Texas, and a B.A. in political science from the University of Washington.