

October 21, 2015

Chairman Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member Patty Murray
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman John Kline
Ranking Member Bobby Scott
Education and the Workforce Committee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Murray and Ranking Member Scott:

As you and your colleagues negotiate the differences between the Every Child Achieves Act (S 1177) and the Student Success Act (HR 5), **Code.org and its partners urge you to ensure that a revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) promotes the importance of teaching and learning computer science.** Congress, the White House, state and local educators, business and philanthropy leaders all talk publicly about the importance of STEM and STEM instruction. Computer science is crucial to all STEM fields. That message must be conveyed in a revised ESEA.

- **We urge you to retain the proposed change to the definition of “core academic subjects” in Title IX (Sec. 9101(4)) of S 1177, which adds “computer science”.** We know the definition of core academic subjects affects state and local decisions about how to allocate resources and the list of subjects shapes what is ultimately taught. This change simply puts computer science on a level playing field with other subjects. It will be up to state and local educators to then decide if they want to give students access to the subject that will offer them the most opportunities. There should be such a definition in ESEA and it must include “computer science”.
- **Code.org asks you to retain a provision in Title II-E of S 1177 that would provide each state with resources to focus on improving teaching and learning in STEM subjects, including computer science.** This provision—added to the bill via a bipartisan amendment offered during Committee consideration—would support partnerships between schools, businesses, non-profits, and institutions of higher education that would implement a wide range of STEM-focused objectives including the recruitment, retention, and professional development of educators. Unlike current law, the revised program explicitly includes computer science and computer science educators. This change would support efforts to get more computer science in K-12 schools. It is crucial the program is retained and updated as S 1177 proposes.

There are provisions in both bills that improve the profile of computer science in the statute. HR 5 explicitly includes computer science educators in its proposed Title II, “Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness” program. S 1177 also includes “computer science” in Title IV’s “well rounded education” initiative. **Code.org believes that the explicit inclusion and citation of “computer science” across a revised ESEA will expand access to the subject.**

Computer science drives job growth and innovation throughout our economy and society. Computing occupations make up two-thirds of all projected new jobs in STEM fields, making computer science one of the most in-demand college degrees. And computing is used all around us and in virtually every field. It’s foundational knowledge that all students need. Recent polling conducted by Google and Gallup show that nine out of ten parents want their children to learn computer science—but only one in four schools offers it. Computer science is marginalized throughout K-12 education. We need to improve access for all students,

particularly groups who have traditionally been underrepresented. **The proposed changes to ESEA that we urge you to support will expand access to computer science education for all students.**

Code.org (www.code.org) is a public 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to giving every student in every school the opportunity to learn computer science. The organization and its partners believe computer science should be part of the core curriculum in education, starting as early as elementary school. Code.org's goals include: (1) Bringing computer science classes to every K-12 school in the United States, especially in urban and rural neighborhoods, (2) Demonstrating the successful use of online curriculum in public school classrooms, (3) Changing policies at the federal and state level to either remove barriers to K-12 computer science education or bolster its instruction, (4) Harnessing the collective power of the tech community to celebrate and grow computer science education worldwide, and (5) Increasing the representation of women and students of color in the field of computer science.

If you have any questions about K-12 computer science education, the work of Code.org and the policy priorities of the organization and its advocacy partners, please do not hesitate to contact Cameron Wilson (Cameron@code.org) or Della Cronin (Della.Cronin@code.org). Thank you for your attention to these views.

Sincerely,
Code.org

Alliance for California Computing Education for Students and Schools
American Association of University Women
Association for Computing Machinery
Battelle
The College Board
Computing Research Association
Facebook
Google
IEEE-USA
Microsoft
National Center for Women & Information Technology
National Math and Science Initiative
SAS
STEM Education Coalition
Teach for America
TechNet
Washington STEM

cc: Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
Members of the House Education and the Workforce Committee