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Honorable Representative Doherty
Chair, House Committee on Education

I am writing to respectfully urge your support of House Bill 2967. I am president of the Oregon Computer Science Teachers' Association, a veteran high school and college computer science teacher, and a retired engineer.

Our nation's next great divide is a digital one. Computing is ubiquitous. Yet computer science remains marginalized and inaccessible to so many, especially women and people of color. Broadening equitable student access to computer science (CS) education is critical, not only because of the increasing demand for qualified workers to fill computing-related jobs but also because it develops critical thinking to solve complex problems, creativity to foster new ideas, and skills to drive innovation across many workforce sectors. No other subject will open as many doors in the 21st Century, regardless of a student's ultimate field of study or occupation, as computer science.

While computing occupations remain the number one source of all new wages in the U.S. and make up over half of all projected new jobs in STEM fields, it remains marginalized throughout education. This marginalization disproportionately affects students who have traditionally been underrepresented in these fields, limiting their future options and, as importantly, lessening the impact their voices and minds will have on economies of the future.

I applaud the efforts of this committee to support public education and recognize that there are limited resources and tough choices. As educators, we have a responsibility to open doors for our students, to expose them to ideas, concepts, and skills necessary to ensure their personal growth as well as their competitiveness in a regional, national, and global economy, and to provide these opportunities to all of our students.

This house bill is sorely needed. It will provide incentives for CS programs with a focus on equity, inclusion, and access in both rural and urban areas and across socio-economic divides. It will provide incentives for professional development that meets best practices and focuses not only on CS content but also on inclusive pedagogy. And, it will provide incentives for research-based national initiatives that have been shown to attract and retain traditionally underrepresented students.

It's a thoughtful, strategic investment that will pay itself off many times over.

Jill Hubbard
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CS for Oregon Co-Principal Investigator