# Congress of the United States
## Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2016

Chairman Hal Rogers
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Tom Cole
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

In order to lead our nation in the high-tech, cyber world, we must better educate American students today. Unfortunately, the United States lags behind many other nations when it comes to STEM education. Currently, only one in four schools in the nation teaches rigorous computer science courses. We urge you to prioritize K-12 computer science in the FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill.

States and districts understand the need to improve in this area and are leading the way, investing limited resources in computer science education. We have an opportunity to support these efforts while improving our economic competitiveness, addressing national security and cyber defense concerns, and creating more jobs for our local communities.

There are 550,000 computing jobs vacant across the country. In fact, most jobs require proficiency in computer science.  Simply put, America needs more computer science graduates, and we need them now.

Without a robust pipeline of workers trained in computer science, the United States will fall behind its competitors in the international economy. Other countries are already taking significant steps to make computer science available to their students. We can't afford to fall further behind these competitor nations. Making federal funds targeting computer science education available to state and local entities will begin to close the skills gap in K-12 education.

Additionally, computer science education is vital for our national defense. A report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies stated, "There are only about 1,000 security specialists in the United States who have the specialized skills to operate effectively in cyberspace; however, the United States needs about 10,000 to 30,000 such individuals." Our military needs personnel with advanced training and computer science skills to maintain its superiority in cyber security and weapons design.

In the interests of promoting economic growth and maintaining a robust national security, we urge the prioritization of K-12 computer science in the FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

_Lamar Smith_
Lamar Smith
Member of Congress

_Susan W. Brooks_
Susan W. Brooks
Member of Congress

_Robert J. Dold_
Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress

_Randy Hultgren_
Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress

_Bruce Westerman_
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

_Michael T. McCaul_
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

_Elizabeth H. Esty_
Elizabeth Esty
Member of Congress

_Alan Grayson_
Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

_Barbara Comstock_
Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress

_Blake Farenthold_
Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress

_Eric Swalwell_
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

_Steve Knight_
Steve Knight
Member of Congress

_F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr._
F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress

_Lynn Jenkins_
Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress

_Marc A. Veasey_
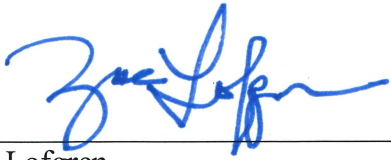Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

_Rick Crawford_
Rick Crawford
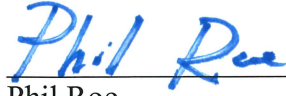Member of Congress

_John Moolenaar_
John R. Moolenaar
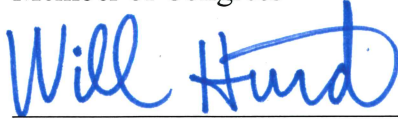Member of Congress

_Barbara Lee_
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress
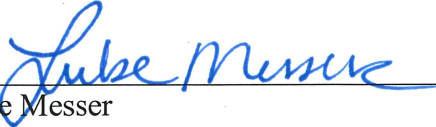
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Phil Roe
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Will Hurd
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Tom Emmer
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Luke Messer
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Katherine Clark
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