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LD 1740

Please consider this testimony for LD-1740 to establish The Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Education Matching Grant Program. Our family has first hand knowledge of the impact the FRC Robotics program has on high school students. Our son was a founding member of team 2648 from Oakland, Maine. I say “our family” because of the enormous effort it takes to start up a team such as this. The coaches, parents, students, other family members, local businesses and other community members all impact the ability to establish a team. That’s where this grant will make a difference to allow this amazing program and others in the STEAM realm to give students a hands-on experience like nothing else they can get through traditional school. The start up funding is the hard part, but the experience is priceless.

If you have never attended a robotics competition, let me tell you it's like no other event. The energy, excitement and gracious competition on display at a competition is the culmination of hours and hours of work, teamwork. These students work together to design, manufacture and build the robot. They develop strategy based on the rules of the game, they set up practice fields and practice driving the robot to prepare for competitions. They also compete for other awards given at the events; sportsmanship, business plans, digital media and many others. This grant would allow many more Maine students to experience hands-on STEAM activities. Thank you for your consideration.