

Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
Testimony of David S. Johnson,
Retired Software Professional,
Volunteer FIRST Robotics Judge Advisor

**In Support of
LD 1740, an Act to Establish the Maine Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
Matching Grant Program**

May 2, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is David Johnson, and though I am now retired, I spent 40 years in Software Engineering, as a Developer, Architect, Manager and Director, all in the State of Maine.

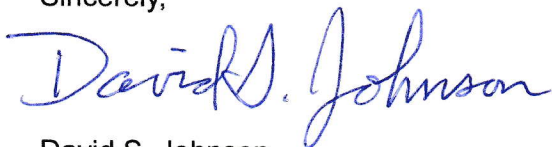
The future of Maine relies upon the young minds we are nurturing today. Employers across the state need young people who are ready to start their careers here. We need people with technical skills, yes, but even more than that, we need people who are engaged, and know how to immediately become effective, contributing members of any team.

The programs supported by this bill are unique in their ability to develop these very attributes in our young citizens. These competitive programs challenge students to work as a team, to strategize about how to tackle the problem before them, and what research may be needed. They come to rely upon the strengths that each member of the team brings, and/or the special skills they work to develop as needs emerge. They mentor one another. According to their interests, students learn coding skills, electronics, CAD, performance skills, construction skills, artistic design, leadership skills, branding/marketing, and business management. They all learn time management, working within a team, working under deadlines, and effective communication.

Students problem solve as a team, prioritize and reprioritize as new information comes to light and competition deadlines approach. They hold each other accountable, they require everyone to do their job, they appreciate everyone's contributions, and they celebrate what they can accomplish together!

If this sounds to you like the skills and experiences every employer would love to have in the employees they seek to hire, I think you are right. And that is why I think that LD 1740 is vital to the future of Maine. I respectfully ask that you vote to support the Maine Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Matching Grant Program.

Sincerely,



David S. Johnson