

Robert Klein
Infinite Loop Robotics
LD 1740

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Robert Klein and I am writing to support An Act to Establish the STEAM Matching Grant Program. I am an alumni of high school robotics Team 2648 - Infinite Loop Robotics based in Oakland and have been a mentor of multiple robotics teams in Maine over the past 12 years.

As a high school student on Infinite Loop, I was given opportunities to learn and develop skills that no other education was able to offer me. I was able to experiment with topics related to mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and computer science; but more importantly, I was learning teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, time management, and leadership skills all in one place. These skills I learned are the same ones I use today as an Industrial Maintenance Reliability Technician at Sonoco Products Company in Pittsfield.

It is my desire to share the opportunities and education that were offered to me. This is why I have continued to work with multiple robotics teams across the state as a mentor for more than a decade. I believe that my time as a robotics student has helped me excel in my career, and I hope to pass that experience along to the next generations. I dream of a day when every high school student has just as much access to learning how to build robots as they do learning to throw a football.

Not every school has the funding to create STEAM programs such as robotics teams, and in my experience, the financial barrier is the biggest thing preventing more students from accessing programs that promote leaders and innovators. In order to create and sustain the programs that will build the future workforce of Maine, I implore you to support this bill.

Thank you.