

Abigail Perry  
Starks  
LD 1740

Hello,

My name is Abigail Perry, and I live in Starks. I am writing to offer my strong support for LD 1740, “An Act to Establish the Maine Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Matching Grant Program.”

As a volunteer Head Referee for the FIRST Robotics Competition, I work directly with middle and high school students from across the state and New England at competitive robotics events. In this role, I’m responsible not only for applying the rules of the game but also for mentoring students in gracious professionalism, safety, and good sportsmanship—core values of the FIRST program. I see firsthand the passion, creativity, and perseverance these students bring to their work. They’re learning far more than how to build a robot—they’re learning how to collaborate, communicate under pressure, and apply classroom concepts to real-world problems.

Programs like these rely on funding. Teams need support for materials, tools, travel, and registration. LD 1740 would make a real difference by establishing a matching grant program to help schools and nonprofit organizations expand access to STEAM programs. This is especially vital in underserved communities where local fundraising can only go so far.

FIRST students often go on to pursue careers in engineering, design, and advanced manufacturing—many right here in Maine. But just as importantly, they learn how to think critically and solve problems together. Those skills are valuable in any field, and they’re exactly what Maine needs to remain competitive and resilient in the decades ahead.

I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1740 and make STEAM education accessible and sustainable for all of Maine’s students.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to education in our state.