

Samuel Knight
Richmond
LD 1740

To the committee,

My name is Sam Knight, since 2018 I have led Delta Prime Robotics 4H, and independent community robotics club for middle and high school aged students. We provide one of the only free-of-charge, STEM opportunities for students in the areas we cover spanning portions of Kennebec, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Cumberland Counties. Our students meet year round in a garage loaned to our team by a generous neighbor. We offer hands on experience across diverse areas such as engineering design, fabrication and prototyping, electrical wiring and electronics, coding, business and marketing skills, the arts, and many others. Our students have gone on to a wide variety of STEM based careers and studies. Each year we have to fundraise a significant budget of \$20-25 thousand dollars, through the hard work of students with both direct fundraising, seeking sponsorships, and grant writing, with the vast majority coming from small local sponsors. In an uncertain economy, our costs increase every year, and likewise it becomes more difficult to raise the funds we need to provide the unique experience competitive robotics provides. LD 1740 provides the structure for more financial certainty for groups like our in these uncertain times, and I urge you to support this funding. The experience offered by robotics and other STEM programs has no direct analog in public education, and it is often out of reach for smaller schools. Clubs like our exist due to the generous giving of time of people that believe STEM skills are critical for the future of this state, most programs are 100% volunteer-based and costs go directly to the educational opportunity that is too often out of reach for youth in this state. Please support this measure. Thank you.