February 24, 2021

The Honorable Senator Matthea Daughtry, Chair
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: TechNet Supports LD. 127, To Establish a Pilot Program to Provide Grants for Professional Development in Computer Science Instruction

Dear Chair Daughtry,

On behalf of TechNet, I write in support of LD. 127, which invests in the future of computer science education.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. Our diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over three and a half million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

The rise of digital technology is shifting the needs of education, the workforce, and the economy. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, technology has the ability to disrupt and enhance traditional notions of work and education. Now more than ever, ensuring students receive a well-rounded education in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields is a necessity for future growth.

Today's students depend upon their educators to adequately prepare them to succeed in the technology-driven world. Continued investments in computer science instruction for PreK-12 educators are vital to ensuring students receive the training necessary to meet the demands of today's environment. Providing teachers with professional development grants for computer science instruction will ensure students have broader access to STEM education, higher-quality instruction, and the skills necessary for the future workforce. Especially in the post-COVID world, computer science literacy will continue to be a valuable and sought-after skill. For those in underserved communities, a computer science education can increase the potential for new professional and academic opportunities.

TechNet appreciates this bill's dedication to engaging new and underrepresented populations in the computer science field. We are committed to advancing diversity in the technology industry and ensuring equal access to high-quality STEM education. We believe that involvement in STEM must be encouraged from early childhood and continued throughout

secondary schooling, and a student's access to quality programs should not be limited by their background or zip code.

For these reasons, TechNet urges the committee to advance this legislation favorably. Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Christopher Gilrein
Executive Director, Massachusetts and the Northeast
TechNet
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