

## H.B. 170 Testimony

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Thank you for allowing testimony on House Bill 170. CSTA supports the entire bill, but will focus on some of the specific amendments.

Computer science education is about equity, the economy, and national security. Nearly every existing and emerging profession increasingly relies on computing. Students who understand technology more deeply are better prepared to be not just consumers, but creators of future technology. They will become the creators of our future economic engines. They will also be the individuals to safeguard those engines through cybersecurity. Without exposure to and education in computer science at an early age, the evidence shows that most students will not pursue careers involving computing later. Thus, it is important to pursue public policies that enable access for all students. H.B. 170 contributes to each of these objectives, and will strengthen the Ohio educational system.

The major concerns among Ohio K12 teachers teaching computer science related to challenges with certification and credit. This bill addresses and solves these challenges, and goes a step further to improve access to computer science education for all students in Ohio. Some of the key strengths of H.B. 170 are the following:

- A clear timeframe is established for establishing computer science standards.
- Computer science would now count as not only a math credit, but as a science credit, or as a general elective credit.
- Certified teachers in any field, with the proper training in computer science, could now teach computer science without having a certification in math or science.
- Appropriation language to fund district grants specifically to support computer science education which include professional development support for teachers.

These changes effectively make computer science count in Ohio. While many states count computer science as a math or science credit, these changes recognize the importance of computer science in its own right. This places Ohio in a leadership position in terms of making computer science count and recognizing the importance of computer science education in the preparation of our students.

These changes also provide districts more flexibility in finding and developing teachers to teach computer science, beyond just math or science-certified teachers. CSTA estimates that as much as 40 percent of K-12 teachers who teach computer science in the U.S. are certified in fields other than math or science. With the passage of H.B. 170, some of the best computer science teachers in this country would now be eligible to teach computer science in Ohio and have it count toward graduation.

As we look ahead to changes in careers and job vacancies, or even policy changes at the federal level, the changes proposed in H.B. 170 position Ohio more positively for the future. All students benefit from some education in computer science, and H.B. 170 improves the ability of Ohio schools to provide that education.

On behalf of our nearly 500 teacher-members in Ohio, and more than 25,000 members internationally, we would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 170, which we see as a piece of model legislation that both makes computer science education count, and recognizes the ability of a diverse range of teachers to provide that education with quality.