

Chairman Cirino and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

My name is Joe Morel, and I am from Bay Village. I'm also currently a Computer Science teacher at Padua Franciscan High School in Parma, Ohio. I became a teacher two years ago after over fifteen years working in the software industry because I saw the massive need here in Ohio for more homegrown, local talent in software development and computer engineering. As a manager in multiple software start-ups in the Cleveland area, I constantly struggled to find qualified candidates to help my companies grow. Multiple times I was forced to hire remote talent—not to save on cost, but because I simply couldn't find candidates in the Cleveland area.

I volunteered through Microsoft to teach Computer Science at Westlake High School during the 2020-2021 school year, and saw firsthand the impact that Computer Science education has on young people. Having early exposure to Computer Science can inspire and encourage students to pursue a STEM-based career, and the more students we have doing that locally, the better our economy will be.

I also was shocked when I started to look to transition into teaching Computer Science how few districts had the funding or full-time positions dedicated to this crucial field of study.

I believe it is critical that computer science funding is restored in the state operating budget at the level of \$24 million.

We need to fund the Computer Science Promise, which gives students the opportunity to take computer science courses for free if their school district does not offer them. Furthermore, we need TeachCS Grants in order to provide professional development for teachers in underserved school districts.

Ohio must increase the number of students participating in computer science related courses to meet the average demand of 18,000 computing jobs each month, with only 1,800 computer science college graduates every year. We cannot fill jobs in cybersecurity, a rapidly growing field within computer science, which directly impacts our national security.

Ohio is falling further behind neighboring states like Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Indiana that have funded computer science for years at an even higher rate than the \$24 million that we are urging you to support. Remaining behind other states and countries endangers our workforce and national security.

Sincerely,

Joe Morel
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