

**State Representatives Rick Carfagna and Mike Duffey
*Joint-Sponsor Testimony – Substitute House Bill 170***

***September 20, 2017***

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide joint-sponsor testimony on Substitute House Bill 170.

This bill is an opportunity for the legislature to empower our local districts towards ensuring that Ohio’s students are ready for the challenges of the modern world. As we all know, science and technology are subjects that are more important now than ever, and their applications are felt across nearly every sector of our economy. This bill will bring computer science to the forefront, and will begin the discussion as to how to prepare our future generations to be leaders in science and technology.

Over the past few years, states have been trending toward K-12 computer science standards – with Washington, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts and New Jersey having already adopted such standards. Sub. House Bill 170 aims to accomplish this goal here in Ohio. Even better, the bill will afford districts the opportunity to choose whether or not to implement these standards once they are officially adopted by the State Board of Education. This is where I want to be absolutely clear: this is NOT a mandate.

Under this bill, we’re tasking the State Board of Education to adopt, by year-end 2018, academic content standards and a model curriculum specifically for computer science in grades K-12, including standards for introductory and advanced computer science courses in grades 9-12. In developing the standards and model curriculum, the State Board will be required to work with and consider recommendations from stakeholders such as teachers, higher education representatives, industry professionals, and CS organizations, both in Ohio and nationally. In turn, our local districts or the schools themselves can choose to utilize all of these standards and/or curriculum, part of them, or none of them. The bill is explicit that our districts and schools are not obligated to adopt any or all part of the standards or curriculum.

Next, the bill will provide even more opportunities to students by adding computer science to the menu of coursework options applicable towards graduation requirements. Sub. H.B. 170 provides for credit flexibility for a student to use computer science to satisfy a math or science unit under the current course graduation requirements. A student could also use computer science to fulfill a technology elective.

To illustrate, a student interested in pursuing a vocation in engineering may wish to maximize all of the available mathematics classes, but take a coding class in lieu of say, an astronomy or geology class. In that case, the student applies the Computer Science class towards fulfilling one of their three required science units. On the other hand, you may have a student looking to pursue a liberal arts pathway. In this instance, that student might feel that a class in website design or developing an app will resonate more with him or her than taking Algebra II. This legislation is about empowering our students, and helping our districts offer a diversity of challenging and robust technology course options…not just to inspire creativity and innovation in our youth, but also to meet the needs of a 21st Century economy. I have frequently described Sub. H.B. 170 as more of a workforce bill than an education bill.

Lastly, the bill authorizes schools to establish a computer science and technology fund consisting of district or school moneys, private donations, and any future state moneys allocated for that purpose. The fund can also then be used to leverage or match additional private donations made to the school for that purpose. The fund may be used for a number of things, including: professional development related to computer science programs, wireless connectivity in schools, enhanced internet bandwidth, or the purchase of computers and equipment.

At the time of House passage, Sub. H.B. 170 had 33 known proponents, 7 interested parties, and ZERO opponents. We are also deeply honored to have the Ohio Chamber of Commerce’s support of this bill and their declaration of Sub. H.B. 170 as a Key Vote. We’ve had productive discussions with the Ohio 8 Coalition, OEA, OASBO, BASA, OSBA, and ODE on this legislation. Those talks in particular yielded a number of language enhancements here related to credentialing requirements.

Perhaps most importantly, both Rep. Duffey and myself engaged educators and school officials in our home districts on this concept and have received nothing but positive encouragement. In my district in particular, I have a mix of large suburban school districts and small rural districts. I have spoken with nearly every one of my superintendents and they have universally praised this concept.

Chairwoman Lehner and members of this committee, thank you again for allowing us to provide testimony and at this time, we are happy to answer any questions.