

June 26, 2017

Senate Chair Sonia Chang-Diaz
Senate Vice Chair Patricia Jehlen
House Chair Alice Hanlon Peisch
House Vice Chair Chris Walsh
Joint Committee on Education
State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: An Act relative to coding and computer science in schools

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council (MasTLC), the state's largest non-profit technology industry association, I am writing to **support** the amendment of Chapter 69, Section 1D, **HB2878 (HD3244) – An Act Relative to Coding and Computer Science in Schools**, to insert in line 6, after the words “science and technology,” the following words: “computer science and computational thinking, including computer coding.”

With 500 member companies employing more than half of the people working in the Massachusetts tech sector, MasTLC is the region's leading technology association and premier organization for tech executives, entrepreneurs, investors and policy leaders. Our mission is to accelerate innovation and growth in the Commonwealth.

Tech in Massachusetts employs more than 300,000 people in the tech sector plus another 100,000 in tech occupations across other industries in Massachusetts, underpinning 20% of the state's payroll. Add in the support (multiplier) jobs, and the tech sector underpins 34% of the jobs, 44% of the payroll, and 34% of the gross state product in Massachusetts. As our *State of the Technology Economy* report illustrates, Massachusetts also has the highest concentration of tech sector jobs nationwide. Tech is driving growth and opportunity across every industry in the Commonwealth.

At the beginning of the decade, MasTLC set a goal to create 100,000 new tech sector jobs in Massachusetts by the year 2020. We learned early on that creating the jobs is not a problem. The challenge is filling them. Companies come to Massachusetts because we have some of the best talent in the world – we just don't have enough of it. Massachusetts companies are opening offices

and shipping jobs around the globe to access the talent they need to fuel their growth. This represents a lost opportunity for employment and revenue in the state.

According to a survey we commissioned with over 150 senior executives, 96% reported that access to a talented workforce is an advantage of doing business in Massachusetts. However, 72% responded that the availability of skilled workers was a challenge to doing business in the state. According to Burning Glass Technologies, there are over 23,000 open tech jobs in Massachusetts today, and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education reports that there are 17 jobs for every graduate with a Bachelor's degree (6 for every Associate's degree) in the Commonwealth. Tech jobs are good jobs that exist in every industry and pay about twice the state average.

Talent is distributed evenly in populations, but opportunities are not. Less than 25 percent of Massachusetts schools even offer computer science and the vast majority of Massachusetts students never take a computer science course. Only about 1 percent of AP tests administered in Massachusetts are in computer science and fewer than 25 percent of these test takers are girls.

Our economic growth and vitality are being constrained by our inability to fill jobs that increasingly involve computational thinking. Our young people are stunted in their ability to reach their full potential because they lack the fundamental tools needed to succeed in today's world. Coding and computer science are fundamental skills that young people need to get ahead in their careers today and be successful in the jobs of tomorrow.

In the end, it is a choice. We can prepare our children to continue the Massachusetts legacy of innovation and to be the creators of the future or we can cede this position to somewhere else and let our children just be consumers of someone else's innovations. Students in all our schools should be given the tools and opportunities they need and our economy will benefit from their success.

I urge your *support* of ***An Act Relative to Coding and Computer Science in Schools***. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Thomas Hopcroft
President & CEO