Good afternoon. My name is Makenna Lindsay, I reside in Rocky Hill, Connecticut and I am a senior at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy. Today I am representing the computer science community that exists for students in Connecticut.

In my freshman year, I was presented with an opportunity by my computer science teacher, Mr. James Veseskis, to act as lead programmer on a coding team that would create a mobile application for the Hartford Police Department. I had virtually no experience in the subject, and I was not the most enthusiastic of students when it came to this course.

Over the next two years I worked with my computing team to promote the app which focused on safe crime-reporting, in various presentations and eventually in a national competition. I began to view my position in computer science not as an extracurricular or a mandatory experience, but rather as an opportunity.

My interests were never truly aligned with computing, but they did align with social advocacy and representation. I began to feel invested in the subject, not as a student, but as an activist. I did not have a personal connection with the content, but someone who looked like me, and didn’t have the same resources I had, definitely did. It was no longer about me. Thus, I continued to stay involved with the subject, and began to mentor young girls of color who didn’t know such a significant field was accessible to them.

Computing is non-arguably one of the most important skills one can have in the 21st century, if not the most important. ¾ of projected new jobs in STEM involve computing and are “among the highest-paying jobs for new graduates.” (Computer Science Education Week) Yet, according to the National Girls Collaborative Project, K-12 “students with less-educated parents or of lower socioeconomic status (SES) were less likely to take these [science] courses” in 2012, and “minority women comprise fewer than 1 in 10 employed scientists and engineers” in the United States as of 2016.

These girls, these women, these students of lower socioeconomic status are not less likely to excel in, or less interested in, or less motivated to learn about the subject. They are, however, less likely to have access to the material, less likely to be encouraged to pursue it and less likely to be supported in this field.

Computer science is a skill that I am very fortunate to possess. It is of the utmost importance, just as the study of fractions is, or the study of syntax and grammar is, to study the use of algorithms in the world. Computer science must be more accessible, and the simplest way to make that happen is to implement it into in our schools. Today I stand in solidarity with the committee’s efforts to standardize computer science in schools in Connecticut.
Though computer science will not be my chosen career field, the problem solving, collaborative, and creative skills I have learned throughout my experience are some that will last me a lifetime. Others should be able to have access to the same.

Thank you. Does anyone have any questions?
Works Cited

