March 17, 2021

Joint Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairman McCrory, Chairman Sanchez, and Members of the Joint Education Committee,

Code.org is a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science education and increasing participation by women and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in computer science (CS). We believe every student in every school should have the opportunity to learn CS.

We are writing in support of Raised Bill 1033, a bill that would allow computer science to count as a STEM credit for high school graduation requirements. Computing is a foundational skill for K-12 students. It develops students' computational and critical thinking skills and teaches them how to create—not just use—new technologies.

Currently, 67% of high schools in Connecticut teach a foundational course in computer science. When we look a little deeper at access to CS, a few things stand out:

- Computer science is available in only 40% of economically challenged high schools
- 64% of Black students attend high schools that offer a foundational computer science course compared to 83% of white students

Expanding access to computer science education equitably is essential if we want all children to have the skills they need to compete and succeed in the global economy.

Our students aren't just competing with the kids from across the hall, across town, or across the country. They are competing with students from across the globe for the skills that will power the jobs and industries of the future.

That's why we need to make sure all of our kids are equipped for the future – not just with basic computer literacy, but having the computer science skills so essential for tomorrow's economy.

Computing occupations have become the single largest source of new wages in the U.S., with open jobs growing twice as fast as all other jobs. In Connecticut alone, there are over 4,000 open computing positions (2.6X the state average) with an average salary of $100,358 but in 2018, there were only 564 computer science graduates.

The policy encouraged by this bill would better prepare Connecticut's students for high paying, in-demand careers and position Connecticut as a national leader in K-12 computer science education. States that count computer science as a core graduation requirement see

50% more enrollment in their AP Computer Science courses and increased participation by students from marginalized racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in computer science.

Thank you for your work to give young people the education they need to be successful when they leave the K-12 system. We look forward to working with you, local districts and schools to expand access to computer science education for every student, in every school.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Roberts at amy.roberts@code.org. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Amy Roberts
Director State Government Affairs
Code.org