mntech™
Minnesota Technology Association

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February 13, 2023

Re: Support for Minnesota Computer Science Education Advancement Act (SF 757/HF 759)

Dear Legislators:

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Technology Association (MnTech) to voice our support for the Minnesota Computer Science Education Advancement Act (SF 757/HF 759). MnTech is a coalition of nearly 170 member companies united in building a stronger tech ecosystem and innovation economy in Minnesota. Our member companies work the spectrum of technology, from IT, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, fintech, agtech, cleantech, and edutech, and range from long-established corporations to small and growing startups.

This wide variety of employers of tech jobs in Minnesota provide some of the highest-paying career tracks in the state, but currently lacks a strong and diverse talent pipeline to fill the jobs of today and the future. MnTech members know that diverse teams produce stronger outcomes, yet the Minnesota tech workforce does not reflect diversity of our community. This stems directly from the lack of computer science (CS) educational opportunities starting at the K-12 level. Unfortunately, Minnesota currently ranks last in the nation for access to foundational CS courses at the high school level with only 21% of high schools offering courses as compared to 53% nationally, severely limiting student's access to high-quality tech careers.

Minnesota companies will not be able to remain nationally competitive if we do not solve this important talent pipeline problem. As a direct example of the problem we're currently facing, software developer roles are the most in-demand in Minnesota, with average salaries over $100,000 annually. Yet our most recent data shows that there is an average monthly gap of over 500 job postings to monthly hires. This translates to a loss of opportunity for Minnesota residents, a loss of tax revenue for the state, and a loss of productivity for Minnesota companies.

The Computer Science Education Advancement Act (SF 757/HF759) directly addresses these challenges by both creating an advisory committee to create a plan to ensure all students in Minnesota have access to CS education and funding the professional development necessary to ensure all schools in the state have teachers qualified to teach these important courses. Our business community and our students cannot afford to wait to make these investments in high-quality education. We must not only catch up to the rest of the country but claim a place as a leader in educational excellence for CS education.

Thank you for your consideration of these important investments.

Katie McClelland

Katie McClelland
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Minnesota Technology Association