



22 February 2016

The Honorable Last Name

Dear Representative Last Name:

On behalf of America's technology and computer professionals, we request that you make computer education a priority in the FY2017 budget. Computer literacy needs to be considered a basic competency that all students need, and next year's federal budget must reflect this.

With each passing year, from cell phones to the smart grid to autonomous vehicles, computers and information technology play a larger and larger role in our society. All signs suggest that they will continue to play an increasing role in the future.

Therefore, it is imperative that American students -- all students -- have a basic understanding of how computers work. Students need to be exposed to computer programming and basic computer engineering concepts to be able to pursue careers in the IT fields of course. But they will also need this exposure for virtually all careers and to be effective citizens in an increasingly computerized world. In the 21st century, basic computer literacy ought to be viewed the same way basic literacy and numeracy was in the last century.

Congress took the first step last year when passing the Every Student Succeeds Act, which made it clear that states could use federal education funds to add computer programming to their curricula. In doing so, you allowed America's schools to take an important step towards upgrading our schools. Now Congress needs to help our schools take this step.

IEEE represents 400,000 engineering and computer technology professionals of all types around the world, including 200,000 in the United States. The IEEE Computer Society members address the full spectrum of computing, from hardware processor design and programming to artificial intelligent systems. On behalf of the men and women who have created and are creating our country's IT infrastructure, economy and industry, we ask that you take aggressive steps to prepare the next generation of Americans for the world we are building.

Please provide additional funds in the FY2017 budget to help K-12 schools teach computer programming to all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Eckstein".

Peter A. Eckstein
President, IEEE-USA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Fujii".

Roger Fujii
President, IEEE Computer Society