



March 30, 2021

House Committee on Education
900 Court St, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and committee members,

We are submitting this letter in support of HB 2989 on behalf of the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO). TAO is the force behind the regional tech industry--supporting entrepreneurs, connecting peers and decision makers, and helping establish the Northwest as a global hub for innovation. We work with over 500 tech and tech-enabled companies throughout Oregon, ranging in size from one-person startups to some of the largest tech companies in the world. We know that equitably building a digitally literate and savvy workforce is key to growing our innovation economy. To the end, TAO supports HB 2989, establishing a statewide policy for the provision of career and technical education from secondary school through post-secondary institutions, community colleges and apprenticeship programs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in computer and information technology is projected to grow to grow 11% between now and 2029, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Software development employment opportunities are projected to grow even faster--at a rate of 22% during that same time period.

Computer science is essential knowledge required by all people to actively participate in a world where computing is ubiquitous. The last year has ushered in rapid digital transformation, highlighting how critical computing skills are to every industry. Equitable CS education is essential to meet the needs of our current and future workforce and this goes beyond employment of software developers. Computer and information technology jobs are in high-demand in agriculture, manufacturing and forestry.

We have a responsibility to equip all students with the knowledge needed to prosper personally and professionally. Additionally, a digitally literate workforce is critical to the economic resilience and competitiveness of Oregon, as the high-tech sector accounted for over 94,000 jobs in 2019. By 2029, 52,000 new jobs per year will be added in STEM-related fields. Preparing all Oregon's students for the careers of the future, by creating a direct pathway between high school and apprenticeship and CTE programs, is a priority. HB 2989 lays the necessary groundwork for growing Oregon's career and technical workforce.

For these reasons, TAO respectfully encourages the members of the House Committee on Education to vote in support of HB 2989. Thank you for your consideration.