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February 7, 2024

**Bill: Senate Bill 426 Education-Maryland STEM Program- Established  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: Support with amendment**

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Garden International writes to support with an amendment Senate Bill 426 – Education-Maryland STEM Program-Established. The requested amendment would be to change STEM to STEAM. If enacted with the amendment, Senate Bill 426 would include arts and creativity to help absorb lessons and impact healthy mental health benefits. STEAM recognizes the importance of creativity and the artistic expression in the learning process. It encourages the integration of arts to foster innovation and a holistic approach to problem solving. The inclusion of arts aims to bring a more well-rounded and creative perspective to STEM-related fields.

This bill establishes necessary measures for expanding the STEAM presence within communities and the educational system which will create a positive impact on the lives of Maryland parents and students. Both STEM and STEAM are designed to prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, but STEAM also recognizes the value of creativity and artistic expression in fostering innovation. Additionally, STEAM emphasizes the application of knowledge to real-world situations. By integrating arts, students learn to apply scientific and mathematical principles in creative ways, mirroring the interdisciplinary nature of many professions.

This bill if enacted with the STEAM amendment will provide students with preparation for the future and enhance problem solving skills and global competitiveness. Incorporating artistic elements into STEM

subjects will make the learning experience more engaging for students. Creative projects, design thinking, and hands-on activities can spark interest and enthusiasm, making learning more enjoyable. Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable with an amendment report on Senate Bill 426.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Therese Hessler at 301-503-2576 or [therese@ashlargr.com](mailto:therese@ashlargr.com). We appreciate your support.