

**Testimony on House Bill 1195, an Act concerning County Boards of Education and
Computer Science Courses**

**Submitted to the Maryland House Committee on Ways and Means
By Megan Williams, Girls Who Code**

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My name is Megan Williams and I attend Calvert High School. I'm a Girls Who Code member and I'm asking you to support House Bill 1195.

Many people believe that since the passage of the 19th amendment just 100 years ago, women have been treated equally to men. It is frequently overlooked how women are still, to this day, treated disproportionately to men. We are paid less than men, and discrimination creeps up in ways that are not always obvious. We are frequently belittled by offensive comments and pressured into more "feminine" paths. This can be particularly true of the STEM field. The mission of Girls Who Code is to encourage and empower women to pursue computer science, since girls are often intimidated by the idea of being isolated in the field. To fix this, our chapter has worked with elementary school girls to encourage them to pursue STEM from a young age.

Imagine being the only girl in a computer science class. You are filled with concern and worry. Are you enough? Why am I the only one? I've been one of three girls in a large computer science class before, and it is impossible to feel comfortable and confident in that environment. Girls Who Code's work is crucial to fixing this overwhelming issue.

Girls are convinced that they're not qualified enough or not smart enough to work in STEM. Men outnumber women in STEM. But we are here to fix that. Women are qualified and deserve to be in these computer science classes, and they need to be encouraged to do so. I believe that this bill is the way to find the root cause for this issue. We need to record data of who is actually in these classrooms to take the first step towards full equality.

Including more women in STEM will only improve our society. Women are the future of STEM and it is time to promote change. In order to close this gender gap, we have to first track the data around it. The younger generation looks to you, as representatives, to endorse positive measures that will push society forward, like this bill. I hope you will make the right decision and be the force that promotes and supports women in computer science.