

**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 Liv Heurich, Girls Who Code

March 6, 2020

My name is Liv Heurich. I'm 10 years old and a fourth grader at Saint Mary's Elementary School here in Annapolis. I am a Girls Who Code member and I'm asking you to support House Bill 1195.

I am interested in computer science and passionate about gender equality. Three years ago, I started an organization called Girls in the Sunshine to promote inclusion and girl power. I wanted to have a girl squad where we could focus on things that matter in the world and make a difference. Last year, we raised school supplies for an underprivileged school in Indonesia and I was lucky enough to travel there in April to deliver the supplies. When we help others we can see the power and potential of all people- especially young girls.

One of the things I am most proud of is starting a local Girls Who Code Club chapter here in Annapolis. Technology is both inclusive and a way to encourage serious girl power. It is such a positive experience to use our brains and feel confident that we are smart and capable. With Girls Who Code, we have a sisterhood where we support each other as we learn the language of computers.

Little girls get told they are pretty and cute, but little boys get told they are tough and smart. I don't think that's fair - girls should not be judged on how pretty they are. They should be judged on their knowledge and their character. We need to encourage girls to be proud of their brains. Girls need to know they can do everything that the boys can. Computer science helps teach us that.

We can't let boys run the world. We need to step up and know we are equally capable of greatness. Technology is a great equalizer and if we learn computer science at an early age, a career in technology is a realistic goal. But we need to make sure girls are actually taking these courses, and we can only know that by keeping track of who is in these classrooms.

By passing this data tracking bill, we can help close the gender gap and make sure all girls in Maryland reach their true potential.