

Chair Senator Feldman, Vice Chair Senator Kagan, and esteemed members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to support Senate Bill 980. My name is Robyn Dammers and I am a mother of two children in Baltimore County Public Schools.

My third-grade son says he wants to be an engineer when he grows up. I want him to get a chance to study computer science and robotics, but that is only offered at less than 10% of the elementary schools in the county. It should be offered at all schools across the state. He enjoys coding the Code & Robot we have at home and likes to teach his friends about it as well.

My first-grade daughter has other non-technology interests, but I still want her to be exposed to computer science instruction because it helps foster skills like creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. At age 5, she played with the Scratch Jr. coding platform with her grandma. She used it to retell her favorite movie Encanto. She created and decorated the costumes of the characters, laid out about four scenes from the movie and programmed it to switch between the scenes. She wanted it to play her favorite song "We don't talk about Bruno", but she was not satisfied with her own singing. She walked the iPad over to the home Alexa. She told Alexa to "play we don't talk about Bruno" and pressed the record button in Scratch Jr. on the iPad. We wer flabber gasted by this ingenuity! I can't wait to see what great things she will create if she is given the proper preparation.

Please fund this bill so that my children and others like them can benefit from the opportunities.