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Subject: Recommendation for Approval of Maryland STEM Program (HB1447)

Dear Delegate Vogel, and Members Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of recommendation in support of the proposed Maryland STEM Program, as detailed in HB1447. I understand the importance of fostering strong STEM education in Maryland, and I believe this program will be instrumental in achieving that goal.

Having witnessed the positive impact of a similar program in New Jersey, I can confidently attest to its transformative potential. The New Jersey STEM program has directly benefited educators, students, and the broader community, and I am certain that a similar program in Maryland would yield comparable results.

Specifically, I have observed the following benefits:

- **Teacher Retention and Professional Growth:** The program significantly contributes to retaining highly qualified STEM teachers within public schools. It provides a supportive environment that encourages professional development, allowing educators to refine their instructional methods and expand their professional networks. For many, this has translated to a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to their teaching careers.
- **Financial Stability and Reduced Moonlighting:** The supplementary income provided by the program has alleviated financial burdens for many teachers. This has reduced the need for moonlighting or seeking additional employment, allowing them to focus their energy on their students and their teaching.
- **Addressing STEM Teacher Shortages:** The program effectively addresses the critical shortage of certified STEM educators. It provides pathways for individuals with STEM expertise to transition into teaching, enriching the educational landscape with their valuable knowledge and experience. I have personally seen colleagues gain certification and become amazing STEM educators.
- **Preparing Students for Workforce Needs:** This initiative plays a vital role in preparing students for careers in high-demand STEM industries. By providing access to high-quality STEM education, the program equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the 21st-century workforce, directly addressing Maryland's workforce challenges.
- **Improved Student Outcomes:** I have witnessed firsthand the tangible improvements in students' interest and achievement in STEM subjects. The program fosters a stimulating learning environment that ignites students' curiosity and encourages them to explore the world of STEM.
- **Encouraging Collaboration Between Schools:** The program fosters collaboration between public and nonpublic schools, creating valuable opportunities for sharing expertise and resources. This collaborative approach benefits both teachers and students, enhancing the overall quality of STEM education.

The positive impact of this model program is undeniable. It strengthens the educational foundation, supports our valuable educators, and prepares our students for future success.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on HB1447. This program represents a significant investment in the future of Maryland's students and its workforce. By supporting our STEM educators, we are empowering them to inspire the next generation of innovators and problem-solvers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Snow Jr.