

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Way and Means Committee,

My name is Eric Davis. I am a U.S. Army Veteran, Executive Director of the STEM Center of Excellence, and Executive Director of the Maryland STEM Education to Employment Ecosystem, MSE3.

I rise in strong support of House Bill 531.

HB 531 establishes a Public Schools STEM and Robotics Program Task Force to evaluate and determine the feasibility of competitive robotics programs statewide . This is the logical next step following House Bill 115 of 2016, which sought to increase robotics programs in Maryland public schools.

Through STEM Center of Excellence, I have helped launch more than 30 robotics teams across Greater Baltimore. Our Fibonacci Centers, provide year-round robotics workspace and reduce reliance on individual school budgets.

Through MSE3, we align industry, education, government, and nonprofit partners, including FIRST Chesapeake and Let's Go with STEM, to build structured pathways from learning to livelihood. What we have learned is this: talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not.

There are a lot of "Not-Yet-Reached" communities across Maryland where no robotics program exist. Without statewide structure, funding alignment, and coordinated policy, those students remain outside the arena.

Unlike many other sports, robotics is the one sport where everyone can go pro.

The skills students develop: computational thinking, engineering design, collaboration, cybersecurity awareness, translate directly into high-demand careers.

There are no pro league draft caps. The workforce is the league.

Currently, robotics depends largely on local school capacity, a willing teacher, or a willing parent, creating inequity, fragmentation, and an unsustainable solution.

Combined with a structured competition pathway, from school teams to regional championships to a Maryland State Championship, we can create sustainable statewide infrastructure. This taskforce can define that structured pathway for our public high schools

From birthplace to workplace, it is all hands in the STEM race.

HB0531 moves Maryland from scattered effort to coordinated statewide impact.

In Maryland, every child deserves a chance to go pro, and in robotics, going pro means going to work.

I respectfully request a favorable report.

Thank you.

Eric Davis, Executive Director

MD STEM Education to Employment Ecosystem

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