

Dear Chair Huebert, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Stogsdill, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ashley Scheideman, and I am the Executive Director of FlagshipKansas.Tech. I'd like to briefly talk about Computer Science education and the impact it has on Kansas students and our state.

According to Cyberstates 2020, the definitive guide to the U.S. tech industry, occupations and trends published annually by CompTIA, information technology (IT) employment in Kansas surpassed 95,000 workers in 2019, and currently sits at 98,811 tech workers. In fact, at the end of 2019 there were 95,208 tech workers which translates into 6.4% of the state's workforce.

Kansas is home to more than 5,000 tech businesses, and the median tech occupation wage in our state is over \$71,000...79% higher than the median wage for all occupations in our state.

As you may know, there is a gap in the number of open tech positions in the state and the number of students who are prepared to fill these roles. Making Computer Science more accessible to high school students in their path to graduation will help expose them to opportunities and help Kansas take another step forward in closing the computing workforce gap.

Studying computer science opens more economic opportunities than almost any other area of study and this skillset is in demand not just in the tech sector, but in banking, entertainment, medicine and more. All students benefit from the creativity and problem-solving skills that are the essence of creating computer software. And learning to code is one of the best paths to entrepreneurship which then helps create jobs.

The tech sector in Kansas accounts for \$8.9 billion, for an estimated 5.7% of the Kansas economy. We used to rely on higher education institutions to push core education and skills into technological advancements. However, the jobs of today and the near term future are expecting students across all socio-economic levels and pedigree to understand the core logical concepts behind computer science and computational thinking. Computational thinking embedded in our curriculum seeds our ability to understand the technology that drives our lives, the lives of others and the new (and not so new but adapted) careers impacted by extreme technological advancement.

FlagshipKansas.Tech supports the intent of HB 2466 to increase access to computer science education and to designate funding for educator professional development and certification. It is vitally important that we invest in our educators in order to increase access to computer science education.

Thank you for your time this afternoon and for your service to our state.