Letter to your local elected official (Governor, Member of State Legislature, Member of School Board, etc.)

Dear Governor, Member of State Legislature, or Member of School Board,

Computer science opens more doors for students than any other discipline in today's world. Learning even the basics will help students in virtually any career—from architecture to zoology. Just as we teach students how to dissect a frog, or how electricity works, it's important for every 21st century student to have a chance to design an app or an algorithm, or learn how the Internet works. ***You have an opportunity to bring this important subject to our schools through policy reform.***

90% of parents want schools to teach computer programming, and students love it.

A 2015 Gallup poll found that 9 out of 10 parents want schools to teach computer science - so our children grow up not just using technology but learning how to create it. In fact, among low-income families, the majority of parents and teachers believe the computer science should be required for students to learn!

A survey of high school students shows that computer science ranks among students' favorite subjects, behind only graphic design and performing arts. Now that computing is the #1 source of all new wages in the U.S., it's important that every child should have access to learn computer science in schools.

Here's what you can do in our state.

The issue policymakers need to solve is access to K-12 computer science courses—particularly for underrepresented populations (including underserved minority students, rural areas, and female students). A recent survey of schools across the U.S. showed fewer ***than half of schools have access to rigorous computer science courses.*** When this field is leading students to the highest-paying, fastest-growing jobs in the U.S. and is a subject students love to take, that's a big problem.

Code.org's advocacy coalition (http://www.code.org/advocacy) of dozens of high-profile technology companies and nonprofit organizations has proposed nine ideas any state can adopt to make K-12 computer science a fundamental part of a state's education system and address this access gap. Three critical policies that I encourage our state to work on are:

- Require all high schools to offer a high-quality computer science course,
- Allocate funding for rigorous computer science teacher professional learning and course support, and
- Establish rigorous K-12 computer science standards.

More information on these ideas can be found at https://code.org/files/Making_CS_Fundamental.pdf and model legislation on these three policies can be found at http://bit.ly/modellegislation.

You can contact Code.org for more support of these policy ideas at advocacy@code.org.

Curriculum and professional learning can be implemented now.

In addition to policy reform, our state can start working with 3rd parties to bring computer science to our schools through public/private partnerships. Code.org recommends a great list of 3rd party options for high-quality K-12 computer science at http://code.org/educate/3rdparty.

Please join with us in supporting K-12 computer science and help us bring the opportunities that computer science offers to our students.

Sincerely,

A parent