



**Support STEM Education Act of 2015 (H.R.1020) and  
Strengthening Education Through Research Act (S.227)**

February 24, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 170,000 bipartisan members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I **urge you to support the Support STEM Education Act of 2015 (H.R.1020) and Strengthening Education Through Research Act (S.227).**

AAUW supports promoting and strengthening science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, especially for girls and other underrepresented populations. These efforts will increase America's competitiveness by reducing barriers that deter women from pursuing academic and career goals in these fields.

The Support STEM Education Act of 2015 (H.R. 1020) defines STEM education to include computer science for certain federal programs and supports existing STEM education programs at the National Science Foundation including support for master teacher program fellowships. Barriers to student's progress in STEM – especially in computer science-- begin during K-12 education. Our college-bound students are reporting abysmal numbers on their exposure to computer programming — just over 20 percent for students who took the SAT in 2013 according to the National Center for Women in Technology (NCWIT). In 2013, only 1 percent of Advanced Placement exam-takers took a computer science AP exam. Only 19 percent of those were girls. AAUW believes that HR 1020 will facilitate broadening participation in computer science and support quality professional development for computer science educators.

Strengthening Education Through Research Act (S.227) reauthorizes and updates federal education research through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). This data is critical to the groundbreaking research on issues related to gender equity in education in areas such as the underrepresentation of women in science and engineering. For example, IES data was used for AAUW's upcoming research report, *Solving the Equation: The Variables for Women's Success in Engineering and Computing*, which will feature the latest data on girls' achievement in subjects related to engineering and computing, how few women are working in these fields, and what can be done. Through new and traditional media, targeted outreach to policymakers, and member efforts, AAUW research serves as a catalyst for action to overcome educational barriers for women and girls.

**AAUW urges you to support STEM Education Act of 2015 (H.R.1020) and Strengthening Education Through Research Act (S.227), two bills which take positive steps for preparing our students to be college and career ready and American workers to be competitive in this global economy.** Cosponsorship and votes associated with these issues may be included in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record*. If you need additional information, feel free to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Erin Prangle, associate director of government relations, at 202/785-7730.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz  
Vice President for Government Relations