Congressman Alan Lowenthal
Testimony
House Committee on Armed Services
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Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the committee, thank you for allowing me this time to discuss with you the importance of STEM education for the Department of Defense, specifically the STARBASE program.

Providing Science, Technology, Education and Math education to America's youth is critical to the global competitiveness of our nation. The STARBASE program engages local fifth-grade elementary students by exposing them to STEM subjects through an inquiry based curriculum and is currently active in 56 Congressional Districts throughout the country. The program is carried out by the military services because **the lack of STEM educated youth in America has been identified as a future national security issue by the DoD**. Last year both the House and Senate rebuked the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) proposal to terminate this critical program.

And today I ask that you join me to again restore the STARBASE program at a modest funding level of $30 million.

The DoD STARBASE program is one of the most cost-effective programs across all of the federal government, costing an average of only $343 per student. Last year 3,062 classes were conducted in 1,267 schools, among a diverse 413 school districts, across the country. More than 70,000 students attended the program, bringing the total to 825,000 since its inception in 1993.
STARBASE is one of the most educationally effective STEM programs as well. Studies show pre- and post-STARBASE youth demonstrate an undisputed improvement in STEM fields. Just as crucial is the positive disposition change the youth experience after participating in the exciting, hands-on, experiment-based program. Changing our children's' attitudes on math and science from negative to positive is a paramount achievement. Research shows that students begin to lose interest in STEM subjects as early as fourth grade and as a result, are not motivated to select the necessary high school courses that will allow them to pursue STEM careers in college.

As a member of Congress, I fully appreciate OMB's desire to consolidate STEM programs across the spectrum into one funding line. However, this is a national

defense issue and has been identified by the joint chiefs as such. STARBASE was created under the auspices of the Department of Defense to meet its critical needs in STEM-related fields. Fully, 67 percent of all those who entered the fields of science and engineering in the U.S. between 1995 and 2006 were immigrants. And many immigrants cannot acquire the national security clearances necessary to work on vital defense projects.

Again, I respectfully request that this committee reinstate the STARBASE program and authorize it at $30 million for this and for future years to come.

STARBASE inspires America's youth to discover technical career fields that are imperative for future national security challenges. We cannot lose this battle and concede our technical edge to the rest of the world.

Thank you.