

Testimony of Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo (California's 18th Congressional District)

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations
HT-2 Capitol
April 2, 2019

Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, thank you for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee in support of \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations for the Chief Administrative Officer to administer the Congressional App Challenge, which is an "Officially-Sanctioned Competition" of the House of Representatives.

Every year, the entries we see in App Challenges in our districts are truly inspiring. In my District, Anna Quinlan of Menlo Atherton High School won last year's App Challenge for "A Smarter Insulin Pump," an app that assists diabetics with maintaining blood glucose levels.

It's not just in Silicon Valley that the App Challenge draws inspiring submissions. In Chairman Ryan's District, a team of four NIHF STEM High School students developed an app allowing high school students to anonymously report school safety problems, such as bullying, to teachers and administrators. In Ranking Member Herrera Beutler's District, two Skyview High School students won the Challenge for an app that raises awareness about animal abuse. Across the country, young Americans are creating impactful apps.

In 2014, I helped launch a pilot of the Congressional App Challenge to inspire young people to get hands-on computer science experience. Since then, the Challenge has grown enormously. Last year, 5,000 students and teams of students participated in App Challenges in 220 congressional districts across 47 states and territories. The students live in the largest urban centers, remote rural areas, and suburban communities.

The success and growth of the Congressional App Challenge is outstripping capacity to administer it. The Internet Education Foundation, a nonprofit in Washington, D.C. provides the materials, support, staffing, and databases needed for Members' offices to host successful contests for their constituents, and IEF works closely with the Committee on House Administration to execute the CAC every year.

Recognizing and celebrating winners is an important part of the Challenge, but even more important is the fact that thousands of students are inspired to code. This matters because our country faces what Forbes called "America's High-Tech STEM Crisis." China has 4.7 million recent STEM graduates, while the U.S. has just 568,000. China is more populous, but we have fewer recent STEM graduates on a population-adjusted basis.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, five of the ten fastest growing occupations in America are STEM jobs, including software developers. The App Challenge is helping create a pipeline of skilled workers for the jobs of tomorrow. According to surveys of App Challenge participants, 44% of students were beginner coders, and 85% stated that they intend to continue coding after the Challenge. *This program works.*

For all these reasons, I'm urging the Subcommittee to provide \$250,000 in funding for the Chief Administrative Officer to administer the Congressional App Challenge in FY20 to assure the program continues to draw and inspire students to pursue careers in computer science.