

## **BUILDING STEAM EDUCATION ACT**

**To be introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, Rep. James Langevin, and Rep. Elise Stefanik**

### Background

Our nation has some of the best scientists, computer programmers, and engineers in the world, but what sets our country apart is our innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. Although there is widespread agreement about the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to maintain and increase U.S. global competitiveness, we often underestimate the ability of arts and design, broadly defined, to enhance the diversity of our STEM workforce. Continuing America's position as an innovative and entrepreneurial country means educating a cutting-edge, next generation workforce full of creative and critical thinkers with the broad skills needed to solve 21<sup>st</sup> century problems.

STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education recognizes the benefits of both the arts and sciences—and their intersections—to our country's future generations and helps students develop the creative and critical thinking skills they need. Research shows that students are more engaged in the classroom when arts, music, and other creative outlets are included in instruction. Educating both halves of the brain results in more innovative students. STEAM education also builds a more inclusive environment that supports greater diversity of students, especially girls and people of color. Unfortunately, federal funding is quite limited for STEAM programs. Congress must strengthen the integration of the arts and design in STEM education programs.

### Summary

The Building STEAM Education Act would expand resources and grant opportunities to support STEAM education programs by:

- Requiring the STEM Education Advisory Panel, which brings together leaders from the National Science Foundation, Department of Education, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to consider ways to integrate art and design in STEM education programs to promote innovation
- Directing the National Science Foundation to award Mathematics and Science Education Partnerships grants to develop STEM educational curriculums that incorporate art and design to promote creativity and innovation; and
- Adding a requirement that Teacher Institutes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century funded under the Mathematics and Science Education Partnerships grant program, which provide professional development to STEM teachers in high-need K-12 schools, have a component that includes the integration of art and design principles and processes

For questions or to cosponsor, please contact Jessica Bowen ([Jessica.Bowen@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jessica.Bowen@mail.house.gov), x50855) in Rep. Bonamici's office.