

June 7, 2006

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Education and Workforce
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Education and Workforce
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ric Keller
Chairman
Subcommittee on 21st Century
Competitiveness
Committee on Education and Workforce
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dale Kildee
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on 21st Century
Competitiveness
Committee on Education and Workforce
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon, Representative Miller, Chairman Keller and Representative Kildee:

On behalf of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA), I urge you to support the enactment of the STEM Scholarship Database Act (H.R. 5139), which was referred to the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness on May 24 of this year.

MAA, an organization of 27,000 members, is the largest professional society that focuses on advancing the mathematical sciences, especially at the collegiate level. In pursuit of this mission, MAA believes strongly in improving educational opportunities for students who major in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. The enactment of H.R. 5139 would be an important step in this direction.

H.R. 5139 would establish an easily accessible database on the Department of Education's website cataloguing all the scholarship and fellowship opportunities, public and private, available to students intending to major in STEM fields. This information would be categorized by the STEM discipline covered by these programs as well as the target population (for example, female or underrepresented minority students).

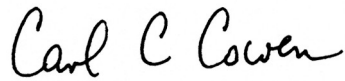
Such a database would serve as an excellent resource for students intending to pursue STEM careers. Furthermore, it will communicate to undecided students that enhanced educational opportunities exist for those who choose to pursue STEM degrees, particularly for underrepresented groups. This will help to increase the numbers and the diversity of students pursuing STEM degrees.

We also feel that this bill shares the ideas expressed in the "Sense of Congress" resolution (H. Con. Res. 421) on STEM education programs on which you are a cosponsor. That

resolution expresses support for the work of the Academic Competitiveness Council, which seeks to gather information on and better coordinate federal STEM programs. MAA agrees that the first step towards improving STEM education is to better understand the efforts currently underway. The goals of H.R. 5139 are similar (to gather and coordinate information on existing STEM opportunities), but in this case the information can benefit students directly.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. MAA looks forward to working with you and your committee to improve educational opportunities for STEM students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl C. Cowen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Carl Cowen
MAA President

CC: The Honorable Rush Holt