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The Honorable Joe Garcia
1440 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Garcia:

On behalf of the ASME Public Affairs and Outreach Sector, I would like to applaud you for introducing H.R. 4828, the "Innovative STEM Networks" Act (I-STEM). This legislation would establish a program to provide competitive grants to local educational agencies to establish "STEM Innovation Networks" in partnership with institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to increase the number of students who are effectively prepared for postsecondary education and careers in STEM fields. We thank you for your bold leadership in championing this important legislation, and look forward to working with you to support its enactment.

Founded in 1880 as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, ASME is a more than 130,000-member professional organization focused on technical, educational and research issues of the engineering and technology community. Since 1992, the ASME Committee on Pre-college Education has been actively developing and supporting programs and materials that strengthen STEM education in the K-12 classroom through its own initiatives and in partnerships with many other organizations.

Strong K-12 STEM education is not just for those students wishing to pursue technical degrees in higher education. In a world in which so many emerging industries are based on technology and its applications, all citizens should be technologically literate, and able to participate in the increasingly technological society. Additionally, with the predicted changes in future U.S. workforce demographics by the middle of the 21st century, bolstering the access to and participation of women and underrepresented groups in the U.S. STEM workforce is essential to fueling innovative and diverse ideas for the future. I-STEM is a critical bill to improve the access to STEM education to underserved populations.

Again, we commend you for your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you to support this critical legislation. If you, or your staff, have any questions or would desire more information, please contact Melissa Carl, Government Relations Manager, at 202/785-7380 or carlm@asme.org.

Sincerely,

William J. Wepfer, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President