



**Association for
Computing Machinery**

Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession

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**CONGRESS ENDORSES COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION AS DRIVER OF INNOVATION
AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**ACM and Partners Applaud “National Computer Science Education Week” to Advance Computing’s
Role in Preparing Skilled Workers and Creating Career Opportunities**

WASHINGTON, DC – October 21, 2009 – ACM (the Association for Computing Machinery) joins with several partners from the computing community to commend the U.S. House of Representatives’ passage of a resolution to raise the profile of computer science as a transforming industry that drives technology innovation and bolsters economic productivity. The resolution, H. RES. 558 (http://thomas.loc.gov/home/gpoxmlc111/hr558_ih.xml), sponsored by Congressmen Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) and Jared Polis (D-CO), designates the week of December 7 as “National Computer Science Education Week.” Citing the influence of computing technology as a significant contributor to U.S. economic output, the House resolution calls on educators and policymakers to improve computer science learning at all educational levels, and to motivate increased participation in computer science. ACM is partnering with Microsoft, Google, Inc., and Intel as well as the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA, <http://csta.acm.org>), National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT, www.ncwit.org), and the Computing Research Association (CRA, <http://www.cra.org>) to build awareness of computer science education as a national priority.

“National Computer Science Education Week will help us draw attention to the need for an educational system that values computer science as a discipline and provides students with critical thinking skills and career opportunities,” said Bobby Schnabel, Chair of ACM’s Education Policy Committee (<http://www.acm.org/public-policy/education-policy-committee>) and dean of the School of Informatics at Indiana University. “We want to thank Congressmen Ehlers and Polis for calling attention to these issues.”

Chris Stephenson, executive director of CSTA (launched by ACM in 2005), noted the vital role of computing in

people's daily lives and the urgency of building a strong computing workforce. "We need to expose K-12 students to computer science concepts to help them gain critical 21st century skills and knowledge, and we're grateful for Congress' recognition of this need as a national priority," she said.

Lucy Sanders, CEO and co-founder of NCWIT, pointed to ongoing efforts by NCWIT, ACM, CSTA, and others to address computer science for K-12 students and to attract more women and minority groups to the field. "This annual commemoration can bolster our efforts to inform students, teachers, parents, and the general public about how computer science enables innovation in all science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines to create economic opportunities," she said.

"Increasing energy efficiency, advancing healthcare, and improving communication in the digital age are just a few of the national priorities that depend on computer science, which Congress has recognized. Computer science teaches students design, logical reasoning, and problem-solving – all skills that have value well beyond the classroom," said Rick Rashid, senior vice president of Research for Microsoft.

"Despite serious economic challenges confronting the nation, computer science-related jobs are among the fastest-growing and highest paying over the next decade," said Alfred Spector, vice president of Research and Special Initiatives at Google, Inc. "These times require an increasing supply of diverse students exposed to rigorous and engaging computing courses at the K-12 level, and National Computer Science Education Week can help to reinforce this effort."

Andrew Chien, vice president of Intel Labs, noted that computer science underlies most innovation today, from biotechnology to cinematography to national security. "Our children's future success and their ability to make a difference in a global society demand that we acknowledge computer science as a core subject in education, as Congress has done with this resolution," he said.

The first week in December was chosen for "National Computer Science Education Week" in honor of Grace Murray Hopper, one of the outstanding pioneers in the field of computer science, who was born on December 9, 1906. She engineered new programming languages and pioneered standards for computer systems which laid the foundation for many advances in computer science from the late 1940's through the 1970s. In 1971, ACM established the annual Grace Murray Hopper Award (<http://awards.acm.org/hopper>) for Outstanding Young Computer Professional to recognize contributions made by computer professionals who were 35 years of age or less, selected on the basis of a single recent major technical or service contribution..

About ACM

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery www.acm.org, is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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