



Kelly, Moran Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen STEM Ecosystems

Today, U.S. Senators Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced the *Strengthening STEM Ecosystems Act*, legislation to boost STEM workforce and job training. The bill would establish a grant program within the National Science Foundation to provide funding to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) ecosystems and their partners to better connect communities, share knowledge, and create pathways for students to enter STEM careers.

With jobs in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields expected to grow dramatically in the next decade, Kelly's bill will support existing initiatives and ensure STEM organizations are involved in workforce development, education, and economic planning. The bill's proposed grant program would not only promote the exchange of knowledge and better connect communities to their STEM partners, it would help states avoid costly and unnecessary programmatic duplication.

"Our legislation creates paths for Arizonans to develop skills in STEM in and out of the classroom by supporting local initiatives that help students get the experience and training needed for jobs in growing technology fields," **said Senator Kelly, a former NASA astronaut.** "Strong skills in science and technology are critical to preparing Arizonans for the many high-paying jobs of the future and ensuring that the United States maintains its competitive edge on the global stage."

"Expanding STEM education opportunities is critical to bolstering America's long-term competitiveness on the global stage," **said Senator Moran.** "STEM ecosystems are effective at bringing together nonprofits, schools districts, businesses, museums, universities, and more to accomplish just that. I have been a longtime supporter of STEM education and am pleased to introduce this bill with Sen. Kelly to support new and existing STEM ecosystems and their efforts to better reach rural America."

[See additional statements of support for Kelly and Moran's legislation below:](#)

"Robust and impactful STEM programs are vital for the education of Arizona's students and their future careers. I am grateful for Senator Kelly's leadership on the bipartisan *Strengthening STEM Ecosystems Act*, which, when passed, will help communities across Arizona meet the educational needs of our students and help them thrive in the long term," **said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman.**

"Over the next ten years, STEM occupations in Greater Phoenix will grow two times faster than all occupations in the region. A holistic approach incorporating STEM investment, collaborative research, and workforce development is critical to maintaining global competitiveness," **said Chris Camacho, President & CEO the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.** "We support this legislation which establishes a grant program for community-driven STEM initiative coordination and delivery. By connecting communities and sharing information we can meet the rising

employer demand and talent requisite that is essential for sustained economic growth in Greater Phoenix.”

“The technology industry is the backbone of Arizona’s economy. Therefore, it’s critical we invest in STEM talent at every level, from early childhood education to workforce development programs,” **said Steven G. Zylstra, President and CEO of the Arizona Technology Council and SciTech Institute.** “The Council and Institute fully support the Strengthening STEM Ecosystems Act, as it will provide the necessary resources to expand critical programs and ensure we’re able to develop the next generation of Arizona’s technology workforce.”

“Arizona’s community colleges strongly support STEM education for our students and communities, especially when aligned with workforce needs, and welcome the opportunity to expand our partnerships to include the STEM ecosystems that would be created by this legislation through a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant program,” **said Chris Bustamante, Ed.D., Executive Director, Arizona Community College Coordinating Council (AC4).**

“The American Chemical Society (ACS) is honored to endorse the bipartisan STEM Ecosystems Act, led by Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Sen Jerry Moran (R-KS). ACS has long championed investments in responsive and equitable STEM Education programs,” **said Paul Jagodzinski, Chair of the Board, American Chemical Society & Professor of Chemistry, Northern Arizona University.** “This innovative legislation will help facilitate partnerships between communities, schools, and governments to scale best practices in STEM teaching and learning and create accessible, and inclusive STEM learning. I am delighted by what this legislation could inspire right here in Arizona and across the nation as we work towards supporting our schools and future leaders.”

“Our nation’s future prosperity depends on excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and on making sure every single child in this country has a fair shot at excelling in these critical fields,” **said James Brown, Executive Director, STEM Education Coalition.** “Investing in the capacity of regional, state, and local community-based and STEM focused organizations that aspire to this goal is the foundation of a sustainable strategy to keep our country strong and competitive. The Strengthening STEM Ecosystems Act is a novel, bipartisan approach to meet this challenge.”

“This legislation will be a transformative investment to enable regional STEM ecosystems across the country to connect their business, education, and community organizations to collectively inspire and engage millions in STEM,” **said Jeremy Babendure, Executive Director, SciTech Institute.**

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