

Efficient Transfer of Educationally Useful STEM Equipment from Federally Funded Universities to Public Schools

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POLICY PROPOSAL

ABSTRACT: The United States is facing a severe deficit in STEM professionals. If this deficit is not solved, research suggests there will be severe economic, security and social implications for the US as our world becomes increasingly technological. Public education in the US does not provide the tools necessary for students to maintain an interest in STEM subjects. Even those students who are interested often face bias or are unable to successfully complete STEM degrees in higher education. Research has proven that there is an immense benefit to hands-on learning in STEM subjects. However, the equipment necessary to experience science through active learning methods is not available to most public schools students. Out-of-date, but still usable, STEM equipment is often forgotten, trashed, or sold for parts by research universities. Mandating the transfer of this equipment from federally funded universities to public schools will provide the opportunity for public school students to deeply engage with STEM subjects. Increased access to STEM equipment will help improve student interest in STEM subjects and address the current issues with student retention in STEM fields at the university level. This action is a vital first step to increasing the number of STEM professionals and improving the prospects of America's future in our STEM-driven world.