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ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 9, 2014

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Forese and Gallego Hope to Spur More Computer Science Graduates

Rigorous computer science course to fulfill one math requirement for high school

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Rep. Tom Forese, R–Chandler, and Assistant House Minority Leader Ruben Gallego, D–Phoenix, are working together on legislation that would allow school districts to substitute a rigorous computer science course for a math course required to graduate high school.

The intent of the proposed legislation is to make it “crystal clear” that computer science courses are to be encouraged, as well as to reduce barriers to high school students interested in computer science.

Forese said that, based on a study by Code.org, there will be 1.4 million computer science jobs by 2020, but only 400,000 computer science students. In 2013 all three Arizona Universities graduated only 300 computer science professionals, Forese added.

“All companies need computer science professionals, not just software companies,” Forese said. “From Arizona’s emerging bioscience industry to the mining industry that remains a vital component, computer science undergraduates are and will continue to be in high demand.”

The U.S. Department of Commerce projects that the need for network systems and data communications analysts will grow 50 percent by 2018. Additionally, the need for computer software engineers for applications and systems software is forecast to grow by more than 30 percent.

“We must ensure Arizona students are prepared for an increasingly global economy,” Gallego said. “This legislation will help us accomplish that while providing support for industries that consistently create high-paying jobs.”