

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 7 – 10, 2025**

FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA’S STARBASE FIFTH GRADE STEM EDUCATION PROGRAM

ISSUE: The Department of Defense has identified the lack of graduates trained in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in the United States as a national security concern. Currently fewer than 1% of students will pursue advancement in math or science-related fields. Fewer than 20% of high school seniors are proficient in science and fewer than 25% are proficient in math. Without funding, the most vulnerable youth, in California Congressional Districts 7, 22, 24, and 25, and their neighboring districts, will lose a valuable tool that could otherwise have been the gateway to these students’ future in a STEM industry that would also support innovation and economic growth in California.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group requests Administration and Congressional support for funding for the Department of Defense’s Starbase program within the National Guard.

BACKGROUND: The National Guard Starbase program focuses on educating fifth grade students, a time when many of these budding future leaders are deciding what worldly topics interest them and what elective courses they wish to take in junior high. Studies show that intervention at this age is critical. Without early encouragement, young students tend to lose interest in STEM fields. When these students lose interest, they tend to avoid the more challenging coursework in junior high and high school and consequently are not adequately prepared upon entering college.

Starbase focuses on early education and hires instructors that have an educational background, professional experience, and interest in teaching STEM. STEM professionals serve as role models, mentors, and adjunct instructors in the program. Starbase alone provides nearly two million hours of concentrated STEM instruction each year to budding scientists, techies, engineers, and mathematicians.

In an analysis that compared state standardized test scores between Starbase Los Alamitos partnered schools with those of non-partnered schools, it was found that Starbase partner schools performed at a 25% higher rate than the state average in both science and math, while the non-partnered schools within a ten mile radius performed at rates of 9% and 12% lower than the state average for science and math respectively. Particularly impacted by this program are California Title I schools, as they are Starbase’s priority student population.

The national total appropriation request is \$50 million. Of this appropriation, California has historically received a total of approximately \$4 million annually for all its Starbase programs.

Resource History (by Federal Fiscal Year)			
BUDGET	PRIOR YEAR (-2)	PRIOR YEAR	CURRENT YEAR
Requested	\$41,167,000	\$42,000,000	\$50,000,000
Enacted	\$41,167,000	\$42,000,000	\$50,000,000