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Varsity letter bill passes committee

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TRENTON — Legislation co-sponsored by State Sen. Steve Oroho to extend opportunities to earn varsity letters to high school students that participate in competitive activities other than athletics was advanced by the Senate Education Committee.

“Students who are part of science or music clubs take so much pride in competing for their school,” Oroho said. “It’s time that our high schools recognize these hard-working kids and their important contributions to school spirit.”

The bill allows school districts to adopt policies allowing high school students who compete in any school-sponsored, interscholastic extracurricular activities to earn a varsity letter awarded by the district. Senators Christopher “Kip” Bateman and Diane Allen are the prime sponsors of the legislation.

Oroho signed on as a co-sponsor of the bill after meeting with the robotics team from Newton High School. The team builds machines in order to learn more about science and engineering, and they represent the school in robotics competitions throughout the state.

“These students have to train and prepare for their competitions in the same way student-athletes have to prepare for their games,” Oroho said. “The fact they’re focusing academic competitions rather than sports doesn’t mean they are any less deserving of a varsity letter.”