



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
**GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY**

**GOV. MALLOY ANNOUNCES CONNECTICUT JOINS PARTNERSHIP  
ENCOURAGING YOUNG WOMEN IN HIGH SCHOOL TO EXPLORE  
CAREERS IN CYBERSECURITY**

*‘GirlsGoCyberStart’ Initiative Delivers Young Women Opportunities to Learn  
Cybersecurity Skills*

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy today announced that the State of Connecticut is participating in an innovative, new cybersecurity training partnership with the SANS Institute that will increase access to young women in high school with the opportunity to explore their interests in cyber studies and learn basic cybersecurity skills in an effort to inspire the next generation of cybersecurity professionals while identifying talented youth.

The initiative, known as GirlsGoCyberStart, was initiated by SANS following the recent launch of their CyberStart program, which enabled 3,500 students in seven states to discover and demonstrate their aptitude for cybersecurity. Unfortunately, only five percent of the students who participated in its first round were young women. To help address this issue, SANS is launching a program specifically to attract young women in high school in ten additional states.

The Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and State Department of Education (SDE) will be collaborating with the Girl Scouts of Connecticut to encourage as many young women in grades 9 through 12 as possible to register and participate in this exceptional opportunity.

Participating students do not need prior cybersecurity knowledge or IT experience. All that is required is a computer and an internet connection. Young women in high school in Connecticut who excel in the GirlsGoCyberStart game will have the opportunity to win computers and other prizes as well as a trip, with a parent, to the 2018 Women in CyberSecurity Conference.

“Connecticut’s economy depends on our pipeline of talented, innovative, and technology-driven young people,” **Governor Malloy said**. “Cybersecurity is critical to our state and our nation, but far too often, young women get left out of this conversation, and never receive the access they deserve to participate in this growing industry. Thanks to this partnership with the SANS Institute, Connecticut’s high school women will have increased opportunity to learn and compete in this fast-paced field.”

“This is a great way to get and keep young women engaged in STEM studies,” **Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said**. “Encouraging women to build technology skills early is a very good way to ensure they are represented in the industry. Technology is one of the higher-paying fields, and it has a narrower gender pay gap. I applaud the SANS Institute, the Girl Scouts, and our state agencies for their support to increase the number of women in STEM fields.”

“There are thousands of amazing young women in high school throughout Connecticut, considering the careers they might pursue after graduation,” **DESPP Commissioner Dora Schriro said**. “Now, more than ever, we need the most competent, the most curious, and the most creative young women to consider the fields of criminal justice and law enforcement and to consider specialization in its many facets including of course, cybersecurity.”

“One of our top priorities is to graduate our high school students prepared to succeed in college and life,” **Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell said**. “The GirlsGoCyberStart initiative supports our mission by providing a unique learning experience that allows young women to discover if a career in cybersecurity is right for them. If participants discover they have a passion for cybersecurity, they complete the program empowered with the knowledge and training necessary to access, compete and thrive in this in-demand career field.”

“GirlsGoCyberStart is a great way for Connecticut high school girls to explore the exciting world of cybersecurity,” **Connecticut’s Chief Cybersecurity Risk Officer Art House said**. “It is a world with great career potential and a chance to help keep your community safe. I hope students and educators will check it out, join the competition and have some fun.”

“Girl Scouts of Connecticut is so pleased to be part of this important initiative,” **Girl Scouts of Connecticut CEO Mary Barnaby said**. “Girl Scouts plans to introduce a cyber-security badge next year. We know that the thousands of girls we serve in Connecticut will be excited to have access to the GirlsGoCyber program and have fun learning while they are being prepared to staff the cyber security workforce of the future.”

“The nation desperately needs more highly-skilled cyber professionals, and we have evidence that CyberStart improves the quality and preparation of people entering the cybersecurity field,” **SANS Director of Research Alan Paller said**. “Further, the two best cyber intrusion analysts I have ever met were women named Vicki and Judy, but women are significantly underrepresented in the technical side of cybersecurity. By opening CyberStart to thousands of girls in high school we hope to help the nation identify the next generation of talented people who will excel in this critical field.”

### **Information on how to participate**

Young women in high school in Connecticut will be competing with students in Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and American Samoa this February.

Registration will begin on January 29 and ends on February 16, 2018. The first 10,000 young women in high schools in these states who have registered may play the game online from February 20 through 25.

An introductory web site with answers to other questions potential participants may have, a fuller description of the game, and a sample challenge is now available online at [GirlsGoCyberStart.com](http://GirlsGoCyberStart.com).

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