THE SENATE
TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE, 2013
STATE OF HAWAII

FEB 2 8 2013

S.C.R. NO. 45

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF AN INSTITUTE BUILT AROUND ROBOTICS AND EXPLORATION SYSTEMS AND REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM TO EMBRACE ROBOTICS AND EXPLORATION SYSTEMS EDUCATION.

WHEREAS, participation in robotics has resulted in Hawaii students receiving millions of dollars in college scholarships to pursue engineering, computer science, and other degrees and has allowed Hawaii students to successfully participate in internships with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), other government agencies, and private industry; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii scholastic robotics began in 1999 with NASA grants awarded to McKinley and Waialua High Schools to compete in the FIRST robotics competition at the 2000 Silicon Valley FIRST regional competition, with McKinley and Waialua High Robotics Teams partnering to advance to the regional finals and finish second in the forty-three team competition, starting a tradition of excellence in Hawaii for robotic team competitions; and

WHEREAS, from the two initial teams and one program, Hawaii has now in excess of four hundred elementary, middle, and high school teams competing in six different nationally or internationally affiliated scholastic robotics programs, which include the FIRST Robotics Competition, FIRST Lego League, VEX Robotics, Botball, Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicles, and Micro Robotics; and

WHEREAS, despite the proliferation of programs and teams, less than five percent of Hawaii students have access to the scholastic robotics programs due to a lack of mentors and resources; and

WHEREAS, scholastic robotics is not just about building robots, it is about building critical life skills in teamwork, problem solving, time management, and effective communication, as well as catalyzing interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) career paths; and

WHEREAS, the critical next step for scholastic robotics is providing real world design challenges for the creative and collective genius that exists in Hawaii's children; and

WHEREAS, STEM education is a key priority of President Obama's administration, including an ambitious agenda to move American students to the top internationally in science and math achievement over the next decade, supported by the $70,000,000 National Robotics Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the Next Generation Science Standards developed by the National Research Council, National Science Teachers Association, and American Association for the Advancement of Science will include a mandate for kindergarten through twelfth grade engineering education with robotics as an engaging tool to address these new mandates; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2013, the House of Representatives concurring, that this body supports the creation of an institute built around robotics and exploration systems in the areas of aerospace, military, healthcare, medicine, and homecare initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body supports continued robotics education in Hawaii and requests the University of Hawaii System to embrace robotics and exploration systems education as a need to be fulfilled for our local students to advance the State's welfare in the future; and

S.C.R. NO. 45

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, President of the University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Chancellors, and Dean of the University of Hawaii College of Engineering.

OFFERED BY: _____