
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ROBOTICS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that education in
2 robotics provides hands-on science, technology, engineering, and
3 mathematics learning that increases critical thinking and
4 creative problem-solving skills among students. Since the first
5 robotics program was established at Waialua High School in 1999,
6 the State has embraced robotics technology as both an
7 educational and a competitive platform. Between 2008 and 2012,
8 the legislature supported robotics programs through measures
9 such as Act 111, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, and other measures
10 investing in Hawaii's emerging science and technology fields by
11 funding scholarships for the State's first "For Inspiration and
12 Recognition of Science and Technology" (FIRST) regional
13 competition.

14 Through FIRST and VEX Robotics, two major robotics programs
15 for students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve, Hawaii's
16 robotics teams engage more than two thousand five hundred
17 students from numerous schools across the State. Today, these



1 robotics teams achieve national and international success and
2 contribute to the community by leading local science,
3 technology, engineering, and mathematics education initiatives.

4 The legislature further finds that since 2009, the State
5 has lost numerous high school robotics teams due to insufficient
6 resources and a lack of mentors. Unlike most extracurricular
7 activities, robotics is conducted year-round, with each team
8 having several mentors. The cost of hosting a competition can
9 exceed hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

10 Likewise, recent federal funding cuts have impacted several
11 Hawaii robotics teams. These funding cuts force robotics teams
12 to rely on competitive grants, which are not guaranteed. The
13 lack of consistent funding has threatened robotics programs at
14 Maui high school, James Campbell high school, and several
15 others.

16 Furthermore, the legislature recognizes that participation
17 in robotics encourages students to join the science, technology,
18 engineering, and mathematics workforce. A majority of high
19 school robotics alumni are employed in science, technology,
20 engineering, and mathematics fields. However, the legislature
21 finds that the State lacks a long-term science, technology,



1 engineering, and mathematics workforce. According to data from
2 the department of business, economic development, and tourism, a
3 higher percentage of Hawaii-born students in science,
4 technology, engineering, and mathematics occupations live in the
5 continental United States than in the State. By supporting
6 robotics programs, the State can stimulate economic growth and
7 ensure Hawaii's youth have access to stable career paths.

8 In addition, the legislature finds that, to sustain
9 robotics programs and science, technology, engineering, and
10 mathematics education, states such as Texas and Connecticut
11 recognize robotics as a sanctioned sport. According to the
12 Oxford dictionary, a sport is "an activity involving physical
13 exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes
14 against another or others for entertainment." Robotics requires
15 intense teamwork, physical endurance, and strategic thinking,
16 and attracts crowds to competitions.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to ensure
18 high-quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
19 education and to strengthen the State's technology workforce by
20 appropriating funds to establish robotics as an interscholastic
21 sport.



1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to
4 establish robotics as an interscholastic sport; provided that
5 the department of education shall minimize any documentation
6 required for teams to participate.

7 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
8 education for the purposes of this Act.

9 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

DOE; Robotics; Interscholastic Sport; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Education to establish robotics as an interscholastic sport. Effective 7/1/3000.
(HD1)

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