



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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February 10, 2016

TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 665/Senate Bill 583: Robotics Competition Grants

Assembly Bill 665 was introduced on January 8, 2016, and referred to the Assembly Committee on Education. The Committee held a public hearing on January 14, 2016, and recommended the bill for passage on January 28, 2016, by a vote of 9 to 1. The bill would provide \$500,000 GPR annually beginning in 2016-17 for grants for participation in robotics competitions.

Senate Bill 583 was introduced on January 15, 2016, and referred to the Senate Committee on Education.

SUMMARY OF BILLS

The bills would provide \$500,000 GPR annually beginning in 2016-17 for grants to robotic competition teams. Grants would be awarded from a new annual appropriation under DPI created for this purpose. The bills would define robotics competitions to include competitions requiring participating teams to design, construct, program, and operate robots that are sponsored by a non-stock, non-profit corporation, which is exempt from federal taxation, whose organizational purposes include encouraging young people to develop an interest in science, engineering, technology, and math.

Under the bills, an eligible team would be defined as a robotics competition team consisting of pupils in grades 9 through 12 and at least one mentor. The bills would require the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to provide notice to school boards, operators of independent charter schools, and administrators of home-based private educational programs no later than April 1, 2016, and April 1, 2017, that applications for the grants would be accepted through a date included in the notice.

The bills would require DPI to award grants of up to \$5,000 to each eligible team selected for grant funding. Grant funds could only be applied towards eligible expenses, including the

following: (a) fees, kits, and supplies required to participate in a robotics competition; (b) travel expenses to a robotics competition for eligible team members; and (c) a stipend for the mentor of an eligible team.

Under the bills, DPI would be required to annually publish a list of grant recipients on its Internet site, and to submit an annual report on the grant program to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature.

FISCAL EFFECT

As described above, the bills would provide \$500,000 GPR in 2016-17. In their agency fiscal estimate, staff for DPI indicate that the resources required to administer the grant program could be absorbed within the agency's current budget.

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