By Senator Evers

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Senate Resolution

A resolution commending the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition team on its outstanding performance in the DARPA Robotics Challenge.

WHEREAS, The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is an agency of the United States Department of Defense responsible for the development of emerging technologies for use by the military, and

WHEREAS, launched in response to the humanitarian need that arose during the nuclear disaster at Fukushima, Japan, in 2011, the DARPA Robotics Challenge was a competition of robot systems and software teams vying to develop robots capable of assisting humans in responding to natural and manmade disasters, and

WHEREAS, participating teams representing some of the most advanced robotics research and development organizations in the world collaborate and innovate over a short period of time to develop the hardware, software, sensors, and human-machine control interfaces that will enable their robots to complete a series of challenge tasks selected by DARPA for their relevance to disaster response, and

WHEREAS, the DARPA Robotics Challenge consisted of three increasingly demanding competitions held over the course of a 2-year period in which the goal was to accelerate progress in robotics and hasten the day when robots have sufficient dexterity and robustness to enter areas too dangerous for humans and mitigate the impacts of natural or manmade disasters, and

WHEREAS, the first phase of the competition, the Virtual Robotics Challenge (VRC), occurred in June 2013 on an open-

source, cloud-based platform and tested 26 competing software teams' ability to effectively guide a simulated robot through three sample tasks in a virtual environment, with the top six teams moving on to participate in the DARPA Robotics Challenge (DRC), and

WHEREAS, the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC), based in Pensacola, entered the competition, placed first in the VRC, and was provided an Atlas robot to continue in the next phase of the competition, the DRC Trials, and

WHEREAS, the DRC Trials occurred in December 2013 at the Homestead-Miami Speedway, where teams guided their robots through eight individual, physical tasks that tested mobility, manipulation, dexterity, perception, and operator control mechanisms, and

WHEREAS, IHMC placed second overall in the competition and placed first in the Atlas robot competition, advancing to the DRC Finals, and

WHEREAS, the DRC Finals challenged participating robotics teams and their robots to complete a difficult course of eight tasks relevant to disaster response, among them driving alone, walking through rubble, tripping circuit breakers, turning valves, and climbing stairs, and

WHEREAS, 12 teams from the United States and 11 teams from Japan, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, and Hong Kong competed in the outdoor competition, held June 5-6, 2015, in Pomona, California, and

WHEREAS, with 25 of the top robotics organizations in the world gathered to compete for $3.5 million in prizes, the IHMC

team and its Robot, Running Man, took second place in the DRC Finals, received $1 million, and was the top finisher in the Atlas robot competition, and

WHEREAS, in competing in the DARPA Robotics Challenge, the 23 members of the IHMC team brought great honor and distinction to this state and successfully demonstrated the value of robotics in responding to natural and manmade disasters, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

That the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition team is commended on its outstanding performance in the DARPA Robotics Challenge.