

SB 602

TESTIMONY OF
LORI V. THOMAS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
March 3, 2009

S. B. 602, SD 1

RELATING TO THE ARTS

Chair Kim and members of the committee, I am Lori Thomas, chairperson of the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts Commission and I am testifying as an individual. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on S. B. 602, SD 1.

The one percent for art law enacted in 1967 and the Works of Art Special Fund established in 1989 have long been the cornerstones of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' (SFCA) support for the visual arts. Over the years, the Art in Public Places Program has grown in curatorial integrity, programmatic value and the professional expertise of its staff. Today, the Art in Public Places Program is a model for at least 24 other state public art programs in the country and more than 300 public art programs at the federal, state and county levels. The basis for the one percent for art law is that art humanizes and beautifies the built environment. Art completes the architectural plan of a building and enhances the aesthetic vision of the design team. The law, in effect, reinforces the intrinsic relationship between the architect's creativity and how the building functions for the benefit of the public, not as a static construction, but as an aesthetic, educational and humanitarian statement.

The fact that more bond proceeds may be directed to the special fund as the result of the state's proposed economic stimulus package is welcomed with caution. Revenues from construction and renovation of state buildings have averaged \$2.8 million per year.

over the last 18 years. Not all repair and maintenance projects are assessed the 1% amount and therefore do not result in revenues to the fund.

Expenses for the fund have averaged approximately \$2.5 million per year, well below our \$4.4 million budget ceiling. This is due to a purposeful effort to manage the fund carefully in accordance with average yearly revenues.

The SFCA, through its Biennium Grants Program, has been distributing approximately \$500,000 to performing arts projects in communities statewide for a number of years. We realize that not all sources of funding are equal. May I suggest as an alternative to compromising the integrity of the Works of Art Special Fund, the Art in Public Places Program and the Hawaii State Art Museum, to undertake a study into alternative funding sources for the performing arts. This could possibly be applied to the Biennium Grants Program and its program areas of Arts Education, Community Arts, Heritage and Preservation, Presentation (that includes literary, visual and media arts), and Performing Arts. The SFCA has already commissioned a report on alternative funding sources from the Western States Arts Federation and proposes to update the 2004 findings. Also, the SFCA is currently considering alternatives to grantmaking as a possibility, a topic that arts leaders in the field are currently addressing.

The intent of S. B. 602, SD 1 to enable the performing arts of Hawaii to thrive and prosper, especially during tough economic times, is commendable. However, crafting a new law by compromising the integrity of an existing one is not advisable because it pits supporters of one art form against another.

I propose reviewing the SFCA's study into alternative funding sources; updating it; applying a new revenue source to the performing arts and perhaps other arts disciplines

as appropriate, and producing a report with recommendations to the Legislature prior to the convening of the FY 2010 session. For this purpose, the SFCA would take the lead in establishing a task force, which will review and update the funding study and formulate recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify before you on this matter.

February 10, 2009

TO: The Honorable Carol Fukunaga
and Members of the Senate Committee on
Economic Development & Technology

The Honorable Brian Taniguchi
and Members of the Senate Committee
on Judiciary and Government Operations

FROM: Ronald K. Yamakawa
Executive Director

SUBJECT: SFCA Biennium Grants Study

Per your request from yesterday's hearing on SB 602, please find a copy of the study conducted on the Biennium Grants Program by the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF).

I am available to answer any questions you may have regarding this study at 586-0301.

Enclosure