

LATE TESTIMONY



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CULTURE and the ARTS

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TESTIMONY OF
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & THE ARTS
ON
February 13, 2012

H. B. 2297

Chair Wooley and members of the committee, I am Eva Laird Smith, executive director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) and I am pleased to offer testimony on H. B. 2297.

The SFCA appreciates the intent of this bill, which will bring live symphonic music back into the lives of Hawaii's people, following the dissolution of the Honolulu Symphony. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who organized performances and worked with musicians to keep orchestral music thriving in Hawaii's communities.

Honolulu is a major city in the United States and the world. The need for music coincides with our identity as a civilized society where the fine arts are valued, supported and perpetuated. Orchestral music, after all, is not just for the elite; since historic times, music is more from the populous and the multitude of cultures and traditions that are all part of our great global society. We all appreciate music in our lives.

The State Foundation is aware of the difficulties experienced with the management of the Honolulu Symphony and was at the table many times to discuss the business of the symphony with the Symphony management. Although we realize that we are living in and emerging from difficult economic times that threaten and compromise the arts, we

also appreciate the need to comply with the statute that established the SOH Endowment and all related enabling legislation since. The thread running through all of that legislation was that the funds in the endowment account “be used for the production of music by an Oahu-based symphony orchestra.” Funds were not to be used for operations, administrative costs, or any other purpose. Language was also specific about the use of capital gains and matching funds. We therefore find it prudent to defer to the Department of Budget and Finance as to the impact of H. B. 2297 on the original intent of §40-88 and the State’s best interests regarding the SOH Endowment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.