



HAWAII
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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 4, 2012

H. B. 2435

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. 2435.

The State Foundation acknowledges the admirable intent of this legislation and welcomes the support arts and culture merit from government. The arts are intrinsically part of the well being of society and always the cornerstone of all great civilizations. Our agency maintains that an investment in the arts is not only assurance of quality in our lives and the lives of our children, but also shapes the beliefs and practices that constitute world diplomacy and cooperation between nations.

We are undertaking a new strategic plan in FY 2013, which directly impacts our federal partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The need to be placed in a supportive environment with stable if not improved funding will be evaluated when our federal funding is allocated.

Our Commission greatly regrets the funding, program, and staffing cuts that the agency and our communities experienced over the years. Losing 37% of our staffing in FY 2010 was particularly difficult.

In light of hard times, our Commission recommends that our approach to relocating the agency be carefully viewed in the context of who we are, the goals of our strategic plan, and what we hope to achieve in the future. Indeed, we are questioning what our legacy will be to the people of Hawai'i. From that perspective, we recommend that the Legislature consider partnering with us in examining the most appropriate solution that will be long lasting and as much as possible, beneficial to all.

We can simultaneously proceed to conduct a study that identifies where we should be situated. To implement such a study, 1) We can request research performed by a mutually neutral organization, such as the Western States Arts Federation, in which we are members, and/or 2) we can request that the Legislature appoint a committee to conduct the research. The findings of the study will be presented to the Legislature prior to the start of the 2013 session. We also request that our agency be represented or chair the committee charged with this study.

Our Commission is planning to introduce a resolution reflecting their perspectives and the aforementioned recommendations during this session.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.