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TESTIMONY OF
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
AND TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TECHNOLOGY
ON
February 14, 2012

S. B. 2399

Chair Espero, Chair Fukunaga, and members of the committees,

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 S. B. 2399.

Urban art, which includes graffiti and tagging, is a form of social commentary, a vehicle of personal expression by young generations of city youth who are continuously looking for ways to have their voices heard. S. B 2399 attempts to turn a problem into a service that benefits the community through assigning specific locations, art supplies, and procedures where young potential artists can express themselves without violating the law. We view this as a viable, solution by government officials to encourage urban art, in the spirit of public murals and street art, which have successfully engaged urban populations and diverse audiences in communities around the world.

We are advised that a task force studied the climate and identified conditions and spaces in which youth can work. We are fully supportive of individual State departments following this process, and

welcome the opportunity to discuss how the outcomes can be effectively assessed. We also hope to continue this dialog about a more permanent solution that bridges the creative expression of our youth with the discovery of art in all of its diverse and wonderful forms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.