



HAWAII

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TESTIMONY OF
THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS, MILITARY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
March 16, 2015

SB 825 SD2

RELATING TO CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN HAWAII AND PUERTO RICO

Chair Ito and members of the committee, I am Jonathan Johnson,
executive director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA).

I am pleased to provide testimony on SB 825 SD2.

Our state has enjoyed a long and amiable relationship with the
Puerto Rican people in Hawaii and their cultural community. This bill
celebrates their heritage that is part of Hawaii's cultural richness. We support this
idea and recommend that implementation of the measure start with appointing
the commission and tasking it with determining the feasibility and content of a
cultural exchange program between Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

The current version of the bill assigns the commission to the SFCA. As a
state arts agency, the SFCA supports the cultural heritage of Hawaii's host culture
and the myriad of peoples who have migrated here over time. Our programs in
folk and traditional arts, arts education, community arts and public art are at the
core of our mission. We provide support to cultural communities in various ways,
primarily through grants and technical assistance in organizational development.
We also partner with organizations on specific projects to encourage the
preservation of culture and the perpetuation of art forms in dance, music, drama,
literature, and visual art.

We have functioned as a conduit for Legislative funding for centennial celebrations in Hawaii and urge the Legislature to have this commission partner with a local nonprofit organization to coordinate events, convene meetings, conduct planning, and apply for funding. In this way, the commission is based in the community and effectively positioned to identify resources, involve people, and generate enthusiasm for developing ideas and attracting participation. Such a partnership also is conducive to applying for funds from government or private sources. As a legislatively established entity within the State, the commission would not be a business entity with tax exempt or tax paying status and therefore, ineligible to apply on its own for grants or receive private donations as part of government.

The SFCA is available to provide organizational guidance, programming expertise, and consultation in event planning as well as serve as a possible source of funding once the cultural exchange and related programming are established or ready to get underway.

We applaud the effort that this bill represents and thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.