



HAWAII

STATE FOUNDATION on
CULTURE and the ARTS

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**TESTIMONY OF
THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, ARTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
February 1, 2023 Conference Room 309 & Videoconference at 10:00AM
H.B. 473
RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
(CREATIVE WORKFORCE)**

Chair Tam and members of the Committee, the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA), is pleased to offer testimony in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 473.

Hawaii's creative arts workforce of culture and arts organizations, individual artists and cultural practitioners are an important and unique resource of the State's economy and community. SFCA recognizes the importance of the creative workforce and provides support through granting programs, as funding permits. An appropriation for Creative Workforce grants through the SFCA can have a significant impact on individuals in the creative workforce.

Creative workforce grants will provide support towards a living wage in the regional labor market where the work is performed by the creative worker. Grants to support creative workers in communities who face barriers to participation and employment in creative work as a result of a low level of public and private investment in the arts, limited exposure to art programming, or other social or economic barriers. The arts or culture organization employing the creative workers' mission/programming serves a population that is specifically impacted by poverty, are underserved, and/or neighboring islands. The work of the creative worker must support arts and culture projects/programming that is publicly available and accessible

In 2022, the State Legislature appropriated \$500,000 in Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Relief Funds to the SFCA for creative workforce grants. In response, the SFCA developed a creative workforce grant framework. However the grant was put hold when Governor Ige vetoed the funding. Consistent appropriation of general funds from the legislature such as H.B. 473 proposes in support of the creative arts community will benefit the State's overall economy. When we invest in our cultural economy, we invest in the economic stability of Hawai'i.

An appropriation of General Funds towards the current framework of SFCA's Biennium Grants to organizations in the community already doing this important work would help grow the State's creative arts workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 10:14:58 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keiko Kajiwara	Sounding Joy Music Therapy, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our organization strongly supports this bill as our music therapists, who do amazing, creative work to make a difference in people's lives, always face financial difficulties to make living and deliver their tasks in our state. The situation worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we now fear for the existence and availability of music therapy in the state without this funding. Therefore, we humbly asks our legislators to reconsider the appropriation of the funds to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' Creative Workforce grant program. Mahalo!

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 1:50:26 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deena Dray	Diamond Head Theatre	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this bill. Creative artists are a critical element of our theater. These costumers, set designers, musicians, etc., often live job-to-job and hand-to-mouth in order to do the work they love. Because it is work they love and it is "creative", their efforts are often dismissed and they themselves are marginalized.

All working people deserve a living wage. Artists contribution to Hawaii is immeasurable as what would our community be without the arts?! The arts lift people up, and that is as important as any considered health initiaitive in our state.



CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

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IONA FOUNDER &
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Cheryl Flaharty

TO: Hawaii State Legislature
RE: Support for HB473

Aloha,

As the sole project of Nova Arts Foundation Inc., IONA Contemporary Dance Theatre is dedicated to the creation and performance of innovative dance/theatre works that provide transformational imagery and messages. IONA has presented over 1,000 performances ranging from theatrical productions, to site-specific pieces, to corporate events throughout the Hawaiian Islands since 1990. The Company provides a platform for a cadre of 30 local dancers to create work, advance their skills, teach, and for many, pursue a career in dance. Through a variety of public and outreach programs, IONA annually reaches as many as 25,000 individuals statewide with work that is 100% home-grown-created and performed by local artists.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected IONA's existence. The main program impacted is IONA's Creative Services. Net income from this program directly supports Operations including artistic salaries and dancer fees. In 2019, IONA's Creative Services net was \$63,948. With most events canceled in 2020 and 2021, program net went down to \$18,580 in 2020 and \$19,577 in 2021. Fundraising has also been greatly reduced during the pandemic, largely due to the cancelling of IONA's 2020 and 2021 Annual Galas which net around \$58,000 annually.

IONA's Arts For Everyone program normally presents 20 different performances each year that provide direct exposure opportunities to Honolulu County's low-income communities, including most seniors, adults with disabilities, youth at risk, those who are incarcerated, and children attending any of O'ahu's 84 Title I schools. This program was put on hold and the Company has just begun commencing performances this year.

IONA needs funding to re-establish programs by supporting operational expenses including artistic staff and office and costume storage rent. The SFCA's Creative Workforce Grant Program will answer this need and make a positive impact on this and other local arts organizations. The pandemic may be "over" but its impact on arts organizations is still formidable. I encourage you to support this program in full!

Mahalo nui loa,



Cheryl Flaharty
Artistic Director, IONA

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 8:48:41 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Holte	West Hawaii Dance Theatre	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Speaking on behalf of West Hawaii Dance Theatre, a 501 c 3 non-profit organization located in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island, we are in full support for the legislature to appropriate funds to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts for the Creative Workforce Grant Program. SFCA will award grants to eligible nonprofit arts and culture organizations to support the living wage of creative workers. Please look on their request with favor. Virginia Holte, Founder, Artistic Director, West Hawaii Dance Theatre

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/31/2023 9:56:58 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evan Anderson	Hawai'i Arts Alliance	Support	In Person

Comments:

It is essential that we continue to support efforts to reinvigorate our creative economy, and to support our creative workers as they slowly recover from the challenges of the pandemic. It is in the interest of our economy, but more importantly, in the interest of the overall health of our community to bolster the arts through support of our artists and the creative industries.

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/30/2023 1:43:43 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazumi Yamaura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe that the funding is necessary to support arts in the state.

HB-473

Submitted on: 1/29/2023 10:49:00 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/1/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo to Adrian Tam for sponsoring this important bill to advocate for living wages for Artists and Creative Workers in Hawai'i. I graduated with my MFA from UH Mānoa Art Department in 2020. As an Artist and Cultural Worker, I understand the difficulties of making end's meet in Hawai'i, even with an advanced degree in the Arts. For those Artists who are local and want to live, work, and raise their families in Hawai'i, there are very few options for long-term, stable employment. Many Artists are even encouraged to leave Hawai'i for better opportunity and possibility for liveable wages. While I also support HB478, which advocates for large fellowships for Artists, I think it is of utmost importance to invest in full-time employment for Artists. Fellowships are short-term and highly competitive, while salaried positions within institutions like SFCA guarantee living wages and possibility for long-term, sustainable life. The COVID pandemic showed us how essential creative labor is, yet Artists remain underemployed and underpaid with minimal opportunities for guaranteed wages. The more stable an Artist can be in terms of employment, housing, and basic needs, the greater the contributions we can make to the community. These positions are especially essential for Hawaiian Artists and other Artists from under-represented communities such as Filipinos, Micronesians & Pacific Islanders.

I encourage legislators to reference the resources offered by [Working Artists of the Greater Economy](#) (W.A.G.E.), which includes a [fee calculator](#) to assess how much Artists should be paid based on institutional size & budget. I also would like to advocate for the establishment of positions for Cultural Workers and Artists outside of the Arts & Culture/Museum landscape, for example within Education, Public Health, or Utilities such as the Board of Water Supply.

Thank you for advocating for a living wage for Working Artists.

Best,
Rebecca Maria Goldschmidt