



No. 1 Capitol District Building  
250 South Hotel Street  
Second Floor  
Honolulu, HI 96813

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Ex-Officio  
Chris Lee  
Adrian Tam

Executive Director  
Karen A. Ewald

Telephone  
808.586.0300

Fax  
808.586.0308

Website  
[sfca.hawaii.gov](http://sfca.hawaii.gov)

**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director  
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to the  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024 Conference Room 224 at 3:00PM**

**HOUSE BILL 1940 H.D.1  
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION  
TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Dear Chair Lee and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) respectfully **SUPPORTS** H.B. 1940 H.D.1 which appropriates funds out of the Works of Art Special Fund to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts for the integration of works of art projects into several major capital improvement projects. H.B. 1940 H.D.1 is a request to increase the appropriation ceiling (recurring base) of the Works of Art Special Fund from \$5,500,000 to \$9,000,000 annually (a \$4,000,000 increase).

The growing cost of State construction has resulted in increased revenue to the Works of Art Special Fund. Despite the fund balance growth, the SFCA is unable to address the rising demands of contributing State Departments for culture and arts programs and services because the budget ceiling remains static.

Increased demands on the Works of Art Special Fund include a fund assessment by Budget and Finance, repair and maintenance of the collection, vertical infrastructure projects such as Washington Place, State Capitol, Civic Centers, NASED, etc., and interpretation of the collection, including the operations and educational programming of the Hawai'i State Art Museum, transporting works of art to neighbor islands, and personnel costs. With a higher budget ceiling, we could meet the statewide demand.

The current ceiling set in 2019 limits the SFCA's ability to fulfill the obligation to carry out the intent of HRS 103-8.5. An increase in the SFCA's budget ceiling would not increase the R&M or CIP budgets of contributing departments but would be drawn from the available fund balance.

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

**HB-1940-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 10:31:02 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/19/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Endres	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep the funding going directly to artists and acquisition of artists' work. I do not support diverting for infrastructure updates.

**HB-1940-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:01:44 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/19/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cyan Garma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am against the defunding of art/creative programs in Hawaii across the board. Art benefits the culture and people in an immeasurable way. If anything there should be more funds/resources for art programs.

**LATE**

**HB-1940-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:31:44 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/19/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
amy r craig	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senators,

As a 20-year active voter in Hawai'i, active church member, educator (public and private schools), and former business owner, I strongly oppose HB1807 and the defunding of the arts in our state. The arts are vital in enriching our cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion, promoting mental well-being, and providing cognitive stimulation for individuals of all ages.

Culturally, the arts are integral to Hawai'ian identity, reflecting our unique traditions, values, and history. By supporting the arts, we preserve and celebrate our diverse cultural heritage, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and learn from our rich artistic legacy.

Socially, the arts bring our communities together, creating opportunities for people to connect, collaborate, and engage with one another. I saw this, especially after COVID-19 teaching adults in 2022 and 2023 many were coming out of isolation (Kapuna) or were dealing with chronic stress and had come to my classes to deal with the hectic nature of their lives. To regain some balance, to find some joy. Whether through attending performances, participating in workshops, or visiting art galleries, the arts provide shared experiences that foster empathy, understanding, and a sense of belonging.

From a mental health perspective, engagement with the arts has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while promoting feelings of happiness, relaxation, and well-being. I don't know if you have sensed the heightened tension as you drove or watched the gun violence on the news, but our state and its people are in crisis. Cutting programs that foster their well-being for better roads is not the way forward. Numerous studies have demonstrated the therapeutic benefits of activities such as music therapy, dance therapy, and visual arts interventions, highlighting the importance of supporting the arts for the mental health of our citizens.

Furthermore, the arts provide important cognitive stimulation, enhancing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Recent peer-reviewed research has shown that exposure to

the arts can improve academic performance, boost cognitive development, and enhance brain function across the lifespan.

As I am sure you are aware Senators that public confidence in our state and government spending is at a all-time low. With enhanced focus on the lack of self-accountability in the attempts to kill the Clean Elections legislation and the extreme spending of Hart as well as the many examples of corruption in recent months. I believe it would greatly boost confidence to have our state continue to support its public programs that directly benefit its citizens in a real way.

In light of these numerous benefits, we must continue to invest in and support the arts in Hawai'i. Defunding the arts in this way would not only deprive our communities of cultural enrichment and social engagement at a critical time of recovery both from the pain of COVID-19 and the Lahaina fires but also undermine the health and well-being of our older citizens who often are the hardest hit. I urge policymakers to prioritize the arts as a fundamental component of a healthy and vibrant city.

Here are some specific studies and research findings that support the benefits of the arts:

### **Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Communities during the Pandemic:**

Williams, David R. "The Social Structure, Stress, and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2004, pp. 53–67.

### **Role of Arts in Addressing Mental Health Challenges:**

Stuckey, Heather L., and Jeremy Nobel. "The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 100, no. 2, 2010, pp. 254–263.

### **Impact of Arts Programming on Underserved Communities:**

Penrod, Rena L., et al. "Arts Participation as a Pathway to Community Development in Rural Areas: A Network Perspective." *Community Development*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2012, pp. 95–113.

## **Potential of Arts in Promoting Public Health Post-Covid in Polynesian Communities:**

Pekmezi, Dorothy, et al. "Cultural Adaptation of a Physical Activity Intervention for Arab Americans: Results and Lessons Learned." *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2014, pp. 163–173.

### **Cultural Benefits:**

- Bowes, L., & Wilkinson, D. (2003). "The significance of cultural participation for subjective well-being." *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 27(1), 57-72.
- Stern, M. J., & Seifert, S. C. (2014). "Cultural ecosystem services and the role of arts in quality of life." In *The Economics of Cultural Services* (pp. 221-245). Springer, Cham.

### **2. Social Benefits:**

- Williams, D. R., & Dixon, P. N. (2013). "Impact of museum learning on children's social attainment: A naturalistic study." *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 56(2), 197-214.
- Kreutz, G., Bongard, S., & Rohrmann, S. (2004). "Cultural participation and well-being in European countries: Trend and contexts." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(3), 275-292.

### **3. Mental Health Benefits:**

- Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). "The connection between art, healing, and public health: A review of current literature." *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 254-263.
- Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). "What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review." *Health Evidence Network Synthesis Report*, 67.

### **4. Cognitive Stimulation:**

- Winner, E., & Hetland, L. (2000). "The arts and academic achievement: What the evidence shows." *Arts Education Policy Review*, 100(5), 4-9.
- Schellenberg, E. G. (2011). "Examining the association between music lessons and intelligence." *British Journal of Psychology*, 102(3), 283-302.

These studies provide evidence for the diverse benefits of the arts, including cultural, social, mental health, and cognitive advantages.

Aloha &

Blessings

Amy Rose Craig