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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
THURSDAY, March 28, 2024 Conference Room 224 at 3:02PM**

**SCR 198/SR174
RELATING TO
HAWAII STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND ARTS**

Dear Chair Lee and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) **SUPPORTS**

S.C.R.198/S.R.174 encouraging the Capitol Modern museum and State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to increase opportunities for artists, songwriters, and producers to showcase their talent on a public platform while fostering access to all forms of art, including fine arts, performing arts, music, filmmaking, digital arts, literature, wood carving, photography, and ceramics

SFCA supports the efforts identified in SCR198/SR174 as they align with the mission and priorities of the SFCA as outlined in the [SFCA 2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#). SCR198/SR174 will serve to inform the current strategic planning efforts of the SFCA.

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

My name is Robert Pollock. I have been in the non-profit arts world for 50 years. I strongly support SCR198 that would Encouraging The Capitol Modern Museum And State Foundation On Culture And The Arts To Increase Opportunities For Artists, Songwriters, And Producers To Showcase Their Talent On A Public Platform While Fostering Access To All Forms Of Art.

While we have been focused on recent draconian legislative proposals, thankfully deferred, that would have drastically cut Arts funding, this counteracting legislation is a welcome relief. The notion of increasing funds to SFCA is not a radical concept. From 1980-1997, I was Director of Composers Guild of New Jersey, a 501 c3 non profit. During that time an enlightened administration led by Governor Thomas Kean, increased the NJ State Council on the arts from 2 million to 22 million! My organization and many others were the beneficiaries, as was the citizenry of New Jersey. We were able to present free concerts in all 21 counties of New Jersey, tour Europe, develop a robust music education program in the public schools, produce three commercial CD's, and establish a \$100,000 Endowment for Commissioning that is still active today. We also leveraged the state funds to raise more from county and federal sources as well as private foundations and individuals.

In 2022, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity—\$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations, which leveraged an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. The impact of this economic activity is far reaching, supporting 2.6 million jobs, generating \$29.1 billion in tax revenue, and providing \$101 billion in personal income to residents. AEP6 (the authoritative Arts and Economic Prosperity Study - <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic->

prosperity-6) sends a strong signal that when we support the arts, we are investing in economic and community well-being.

However the Arts are essential in more profound ways than the material, economic, and bureaucratic. Imagination and creativity are uniquely human traits. Through our senses we experience colors, forms, sounds, and motion. We transform these objects of the senses into powerful, emotional, intellectual and healthily creative works. Such activity humanizes us and distinguishes us from the rest of the animal world. Such artistic activity enlivens our spirits and nourishes our soul with its beauty and freedom.

Art has always needed outside support: state, church, aristocratic, foundation, corporate, philanthropic, etc. If a market economy could alone sustain Art, then famous artists such as Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, German composer Franz Schubert and American author Herman Melville would have been rich men. But they made little money from their art during their lifetimes.

Art is a survival tool. There are countless stories of survivors from the Holocaust and other disasters who attended concerts or viewed exhibits, or heard a poetry reading that allowed them to enter the realm of Spirit and transcend the horrors of their subjugation. They survived because of Art. We must place the enlivenment of our spirits and nourishment of our souls as high a priority as the necessary sustenance of our bodies. Body is a function of Spirit. The experience of Art transcends and includes the experience of surviving. We must integrate Art into our lives and in all sectors of the society, private, civic and government. If we do not, then the reason for surviving disappears. Art reminds us of the priority of things - of what is most important in life. It pulls us away from the dark, destructive societal forces that create the "death spiral."



CARES

A GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE

LATE

Dear Chair, Vice Chair & TCA Committee,

CARES is in strong support. This was inspired by the filmmakers, content creators, actors, indie producers & artists in the arts & creative industries. It was inspired by a Ways & Means conversation.

In Ways & Means this year, Jan 3, 2024, there was a briefing, the DBET director talks about the film credit and the Chair of Education brings up a concern about career pathways for development & training for students that want to get into the creative media industries.

For those that are not familiar with the arts, when we talk about the arts and what the arts & culture contributes as value to the State of Hawaii, we are talking about the technical career skills & pathways of the art community. Artist's career pathways look like is so diverse and it includes careers as painters, visual artists, fashion designers, graphic designers, developers of brands, set designers, instrumentalists, sound engineers, CGI designers, piano players, photographers. Each of these careers contribute in a significant way to the State's overall economic development.



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Creating art infrastructure is building these pathways for the artists is to help them develop skills, enhance talent, practice & rehearse and to teach others the artistry & skill to pass on the culture and to create more artists. In doing so, building the infrastructure, funding the arts, can look like creating apprenticeships where basket weavers can pass on the skill of weaving Hawaiian baskets, and now others are taught a cultural practice to weave Hawaiian baskets. Or, in funding art infrastructure, a graphic designer who teaches K-12 students about

The funding for the infrastructure helps artists develop skill while enhancing culture and when the artists produce, this contributes to economic development. Each of these markets, fashion, film, photography, branding & marketing, are an extension of the arts and a personification of our culture. And so while art & artists are abstract, there are practical ways to build the art community into a thriving economic development sector.

Yet, here in Honolulu, there are concerns from artists, the film industry & The State that is not articulated well. The goals & planning process is not expressed. This resolution articulates the pathways and it outlines the goals & action plan in practical & achievable ways, starting with the work that is already in process at the Capitol Museum in downtown.

The resolution, as is, encapsulates the Museum & The State Foundation's momentum while encouraging collaborations with art focused entities & schools. The new proposal is submitted [here](#).



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“BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature encourages The Capitol Modern Museum and the SFCA to increase opportunity for artists, songwriters & producers to showcase their talent on a public platform while fostering access to all forms of arts including fine arts, performing arts, music, filmmaking, digital arts, literature, wood carving, photography, ceramics, visual arts, fashion design, broadcast, journalism, community media, content creators & art vendors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature recognizes the value of student artist internships and art education as an important foundation to teach, train, equip & empower student artists, local talent & independent producers to grow in their artistry. Therefore, the Legislature urges the Capitol Modern Museum & the SFCA to focus on education, extracurricular activity & career development strategies for art students from K-12 and the college level to enhance their learning experience with access to career pathways, scholarships, grants & apprenticeship opportunities. Diversity, inclusion & equity for students of all demographics & cultures should be considered while access to arts for marginalized, stigmatized, low-income, impoverished schools should be highly prioritized.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature holds in high esteem the work of other art-focused entities in the State of Hawaii such as the City’s Mayor’s Office of Culture & the Arts, Hawaii Theatre, The Honolulu Youth Theatre, The Diamond Head Theatre, the Hawaii Youth & Symphony, The University of Hawaii’s MELE program, Olelo Community Media, Creative Lab Hawai’i Accelerator and CreativeSpace at Entrepreneurs Sandbox, and therefore urges the Capitol Modern and the SFCA to develop collaborations with these organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature appreciates the work of the teams of students that contribute to the significant magnificent cultural value of Hawaii by uplifting the arts with their profound creative expressions and urges the Capitol Modern and the SFCA to consider partnering with public & private schools nationally and across the State of Hawaii to equip & empower the youths to elevate their art productions while further creating accessibility in art programming & resources for the youths of Hawaii by creating afterschool programming, creative classes, apprenticeships, studio & equipment training opportunities, student-led performances, interactive learning series.



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The new proposal request Includes modern arts, contemporary art & integrated media sector. The new proposal will prioritize marginalized schools & student. It seeks to collaborate with Honolulu Community College's MELE program, the University of Hawaii's West Oahu Creative Media program, The Entrepreneur's Sandbox and The Creative Labs program. It creates specific art educational pathways for students such as performances, classes, training & interactive learning series.

Blessings

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