

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**DAWN N.S. CHANG**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

**LAURA H.E. KAAKUA**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**M. KALEO MANUEL**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of**  
**DAWN N. S. CHANG**  
**Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on**  
**CULTURE, ARTS, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**Friday, February 10, 2023**  
**09:30 AM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 309 Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of**  
**HOUSE BILL 269**  
**RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN THEATER CENTER**

House Bill 269 proposes to designate the Hawaii Theater Center as the Hawaii State Theater, and to appropriate funds to support it through the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department). **The Department appreciates the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Hawaii Theater Center is a recognized historic property listed in the Hawaii and national registers of historic places. It is also recognized as an important cultural center.

House Bill 269 SECTION 2 amends Section 6E, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to designate the Hawaii Theater Center as the Hawaii State Theater. It proposes that this designation be implemented by the Department's "historic preservation program [State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD)] through an annual appropriation from the general revenues of the State." The Hawaii Theater Center is to remain independent. The funding provided to the Hawaii Theater Center is to be exempt from the provisions of Chapter 42F, HRS, except that recipients of contracts or providers of services to the Hawaii Theater Center utilizing these funds shall be subject to Chapter 42F HRS.

The Department believes that appropriation to the Department as an intermediary to the Hawaii Theater Center adds an unnecessary level of complexity to the appropriation and disbursement of funds. This is especially true as SHPD's administrative personnel are stretched to the limit with their current administrative duties. The Legislature has appropriated funds to the Bishop Museum in prior sessions as the Hawaii State Museum through the Department of Budget and Finance, as is proposed in House Bill 474 this session. The Department believes that such an approach is likely to be more effective and efficient than appropriating funding through the Department and SHPD.

If the Legislature decides to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Theater Center through the Department, the Department asks that the measure appropriate some funds to cover SHPD's additional expenses for administering these funds, and that an administrative position be established in SHPD carry out the necessary duties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

# HAWAII STATE HSTC THEATRE COUNCIL

To the Esteemed Members of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs,

While the Hawai'i State Theatre Council recognizes the benefit of The Hawaii Theatre Center in our community, we want to also recognize that Hawaii Theatre Center is one of many theaters in Hawai'i, all of whom deserve and would benefit greatly from financial support.

We applaud this attention to the importance of arts organizations in our community, and want to alert you to the members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council, an array of theatres in Hawai'i who are producing work utilizing local talent for the people of Hawai'i.

For example, these Council Member theatres are all also providing theatre experiences within the core of Honolulu:

- Kumu Kahua Theatre has been producing plays written and produced by, for, and about the people of Hawai'i for more than 50 years.
- Honolulu Theatre for Youth is the only professional producing theatre in Hawai'i, producing theatre and education programs for the youth of Hawai'i, many of which are written and developed by local writers and artists.
- TAG-The Actors Group produces off-off Broadway productions with a commitment to diversity and excellence.
- The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival produces the work of Shakespeare and other notable historical writers, introducing artists and audiences to fresh, local-takes on scripts that define the foundations of theatre.
- PlayBuilders of Hawai'i directly engages the local community by developing personal stories into theatre pieces, often using those storytellers as actors in their productions.
- Hawai'i Mission Houses acts as a presenting stage for organizations such as The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival and PlayBuilders of Hawai'i, and also produces their own, locally written work reflecting historical Hawaiian personalities and events.

Our membership also includes Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, the I'm a Bright Kid Foundation, Chaminade University Theatre, Mid-Pacific Institute, UHM Kennedy Theatre, Aloha Performing Arts Company (Island of Hawai'i), and Maui OnStage (Maui).

While the Hawaii Theatre Center's building is historically and architecturally significant, they are a presenting house rather than a producing organization. That is to say they host, rather than create. Much of the work presented there is touring work from the continent that does not reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The cost of renting the theatre is often prohibitive for local arts organizations and the cost of tickets for events at the theatre are more than most local residents can afford.

If funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting the members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council, which exists to elevate member organizations so that they can better serve the Hawai'i theatre community and, thereby, the community at large.

With Aloha,

Donna Blanchard  
808-536-4222 office  
219-741-4880 cell

President  
[Hawaii State Theatre Council](#)

Managing Director  
[Kumu Kahua Theatre](#)

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:16:45 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregory Dunn	Hawaii Theatre Center	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Rep. Tam and members of the Committee.

My name is Gregory D. Dunn and I am the current President & CEO of the Hawaii Theatre Center, and I'm proving my testimony in support of this bill. The theatre is a historic icon in the State of Hawaii, the last remaining venue of its size and opulent style in the state.

The theatre holds a very special place in the cultural fabric of our islands, having been christened the "Pride of the Pacific" by the local newspaper during the Theatre's grand opening on Sept. 6, 1922. No other venue of its size and grandeur was attempted over the last 100 years. We are fortunate that the volunteers who envisioned the Theatre becoming a cultural arts center were able to raise the \$32m in the 1980's and 90's to save the theatre from demolition and ensure that the Theatre would be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Today, as a private non-profit organization, the Theatre operates with a mission that includes both the preservation of the historic Hawaii Theatre building, and as the operator of the Hawaii Theatre Center, the State's premier non-profit performing arts venue.

The Theatre welcomes a broad range of shows, and in the past year alone has welcomed headlining acts like Jefferson Starship, Ronny Chieng, Tom Segura, Blue Oyster Cult, and the Stars of American Ballet. True to our mission to support local performing arts, during the same past year period we've worked with 28 non-profit organizations to present their shows, including Ohana Arts, Ballet Hawaii, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Na Maka O Pu'u Wai Aloha, Sounds of Aloha Chorus, Hawaii Foundation for Educators, Royal Hawaiian Band, Hawaii LGBTQ Foundation, Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts, Fil-Am Center, Tau Dance, and many others. In addition, the Hawaii Theatre recently welcomed the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as Artistic Partners and the Company in Residence at the Historic Hawaii Theatre, providing the Orchestra with a permanent location from which to operate.

In partnership with the Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts, the Hawaii Theatre was the home for two years of the Na Hoku Hanohano Awards. This allowed the awards to go on as planned during the COVID pandemic mandated shut-down, and helped to broaden the reach of our local entertainers through the Theatre's strength of digital content delivery and global reach, and highlight the importance of Hawaiian arts and culture by associating it with such an impressive venue.

The theatre's reach in our performing arts community is truly state-wide. The venue regularly hosts artists from around the state, most recently welcoming Hawaii Islands Mark Yamanaka, Maui's Amy Hanaiali'i, and Maui's Grammy Award winning Kalani Pe'a to our stage. We also support other theatre's in the state by working to route mainland touring acts to neighbor island venues when we book shows in, providing opportunities for top-flight entertainment opportunities for residents of all islands.

For many years, the Theatre has also operated children's theatre education programs, welcoming over 10,000 keiki per year to enjoy one of our musicals or stage performances that are offered bi-monthly. These discounted programs provide necessary educationally based curriculum in our schools, and we frequently fill all of the offered spots with children from Hawaii's public and charter school system, and are sustained through grant funding secured by the Theatre from private donors and foundations.

For many of our local performers and international touring groups alike, having the opportunity to perform on the stage of the Historic Hawaii Theatre ranks as one of the highlights of their career. The 1,400 seat venue is steeped in history, and is one of the most historically significant structures in the state along side Iolani Palace and Bishop Museum. The Theatre's neon sign that proudly lights the evening sky with the name HAWAII is photographed daily, and can be found in social media posts from locals and visitors. In addition, the theatre has been home to internationally viewed programs that were recorded in the theatre such as Hawaii 5-O, NCIS Hawaii, Last Taxi Dance, Fluffy's Comedy Special, Engelbert Humperdink's Holiday Special, and over 50 other episodes of Moonlight Mele with the Makaha Sons.

During the current fiscal year, running from June 2022 through May 2023, the theatre has already welcomed over 102,000 patrons through our doors, and we anticipate by the end of the fiscal year that number will grow to over 120,000 patrons.

The theatre's operating budget is funded primarily through ticketing sales, ticketing fees, membership, grants and donations. Post-COVID, the theatre is operating at a near break-even operationally, but is continually challenged to surplus enough from operations to cover nearly

\$1m in annual depreciation and maintenance. The theatre has received modest government funding to support operations in the past, and is frequently supported by the State of Hawaii through CIP Grant in Aid funding that is project specific.

As the number of shows the Theatre presents increases, and the number of patrons grow, the pressure to maintain the facility also grows. The Theatre is facing a significant hurdle in the coming years, in that many of the improvements undertaken as part of the renovation to reopen the theatre in 1996 are at or past the end of their useful life and must be replaced. The theatre is in the middle of an urgent campaign to raise \$1.5m in order to undertake concrete spalling repairs and repaint the exterior of the building. Coming due in the near future we will need to replace all of the carpeting in the facility, upgrade telecommunications and electrical systems, AC systems, curtains and drapes, and interior plumbing systems. In addition, in order to better meet the needs of our theatre users, it's anticipated that the long-planned expansion of the stage area must be undertaken.

The state of Hawaii has the opportunity to recognize the Hawaii Theatre as the Hawaii State Theatre through this bill. The designation will help to cement the importance of the historic venue in our community, and bestow upon it the level of recognition that will aid in the securing of funding to support the on-going maintenance and upkeep of the venue. In addition, by identifying the Theatre's importance in the fabric of our community through this designation and securing on-going funding to support the physical repairs and maintenance of the historically significant facility will protect it from the uncertain nature of grant funding from private sources.

It's my hope that the legislature will support this act, and continue to work with us in partnership for the benefit of our community through the designation of the Hawaii State Theatre.

With Aloha,

Gregory D. Dunn,

President & CEO

Hawaii Theatre Center

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:07:30 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Teresa Madden	PlayBuilders of Hawaii Theater Company	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To the Esteemed Members of the Hawai‘i State House of Representatives Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs,

While the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council recognizes the benefit of The Hawaii Theatre Center in our community, we want to also recognize that Hawaii Theatre Center is one of many theaters in Hawa‘i, all of whom deserve and would benefit greatly from financial support.

We applaud this attention to the importance of arts organizations in our community, and want to alert you to the members of the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council, an array of theatres in Hawai‘i who are producing work utilizing local talent for the people of Hawai‘i.

For example, these Council Member theatres are all also providing theatre experiences within the core of Honolulu:

- Kumu Kahua Theatre has been producing plays written and produced by, for, and about the people of Hawai‘i for more than 50 years.
- Honolulu Theatre for Youth is the only professional producing theatre in Hawai‘i, producing theatre and education programs for the youth of Hawai‘i, many of which are written and developed by local writers and artists.
- TAG-The Actors Group produces off-off Broadway productions with a commitment to diversity and excellence.
- The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival produces the work of Shakespeare and other notable historical writers, introducing artists and audiences to fresh, local-takes on scripts that define the foundations of theatre.
- PlayBuilders of Hawaii Theater Company's mission is to gather and share real stories that resonate with, empower and connect the many culturally rich and diverse communities of Hawai'i.
- Hawai‘i Mission Houses acts as a presenting stage for organizations such as The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival and PlayBuilders of Hawai‘i, and also produces their own, locally written work reflecting historical Hawaiian personalities and events.

Our membership also includes Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, the I’m a Bright Kid Foundation, Chaminade University Theatre, Mid-Pacific Institute, UHM Kennedy Theatre, Aloha Performing Arts Company (Island of Hawai‘i), and Maui OnStage (Maui).



While the Hawaii Theatre Center's building is historically and architecturally significant, they are a presenting house rather than a producing organization. That is to say they host, rather than create. Much of the work presented there is touring work from the continent that does not reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The cost of renting the theatre is often prohibitive for local arts organizations and the cost of tickets for events at the theatre are more than most local residents can afford.

Not only that but many theatre practitioners, who work with Hawaii's stories would like very much to be able to afford to produce a show at the Hawaii Theatre Center. If they are going to be able to include "State" in their title, then they should be required to allow Hawaii's non-profit theater companies to produce shows there at affordable rates.

In addition, if funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting the members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council, which exists to elevate member organizations so that they can better serve the Hawai'i theatre community and, thereby, the community at large.

With Aloha,

Terri Madden, MFA

Founder and Producing Executive Director  
PlayBuilders of Hawai'i Theater Company

807 Kaluanui RD  
Honolulu, HI 96825

[www.playbuilders.org](http://www.playbuilders.org)

(808) 218-0103

The Hawaii Theatre Center is one of many theaters in Hawai'i, all of whom deserve and would benefit greatly from financial support.

I applaud this attention to the importance of arts organizations in our community, but want to alert you to the fact that there are a host of theatres in Hawai'i who are producing work utilizing local talent for the people of Hawai'i.

For example, these theatres are all providing theatre experiences within the core of Honolulu:

- Kumu Kahua Theatre has been producing plays written and produced by, for, and about the people of Hawai'i for more than 50 years.
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- Hawai'i Mission Houses acts as a presenting stage for organizations such as The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival and PlayBuilders of Hawai'i, and also produces their own, locally written work reflecting historical Hawaiian personalities and events.

Other theatres include Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, the I'm a Bright Kid Foundation, Chaminade University Theatre, Mid-Pacific Institute, UHM Kennedy Theatre, Aloha Performing Arts Company (Island of Hawai'i), and Maui OnStage (Maui).

While the Hawaii Theatre Center's building is historically and architecturally significant, they are a presenting house rather than a producing organization. That is to say they host, rather than create. Much of the work presented there is touring work from the continent that does not reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The cost of renting the theatre is often prohibitive for local arts organizations and the costs of tickets for events at the theatre are more than most local residents can afford.

If funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting all theatres in Hawaii, so that they can better serve the community at large.

Rebecca Dunning  
Managing Director  
Honolulu Theatre for Youth

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 8:34:55 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luana Whitford-Mitchell	Maui Community Theater dba Maui OnStage	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Esteemed Members of the Hawai‘i State House of Representatives Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs,

While the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council recognizes the benefit of The Hawaii Theatre Center in our community, we want to also recognize that Hawaii Theatre Center is one of MANY theaters in Hawa‘i, all of whom deserve and would benefit greatly from financial support.

We applaud this attention to the importance of arts organizations in our community, and want to alert you to the members of the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council, an array of theatres in Hawai‘i who are producing work utilizing local talent for the people of Hawai‘i.

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- TAG-The Actors Group produces off-off Broadway productions with a commitment to diversity and excellence.
- The Hawaii Shakespeare Festival produces the work of Shakespeare and other notable historical writers, introducing artists and audiences to fresh, local-takes on scripts that define the foundations of theatre.
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Our membership also includes Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, the I’m a Bright Kid Foundation, Chaminade University Theatre, Mid-Pacific Institute, UHM Kennedy Theatre, Aloha Performing Arts Company (Island of Hawai‘i), and **Maui OnStage (Maui)**.

While the Hawaii Theatre Center's building is historically and architecturally significant, they are a presenting house rather than a producing organization. That is to say they host, rather than create. Much of the work presented there is touring work from the continent that does not reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The cost of renting the theatre is often prohibitive for local arts organizations and the cost of tickets for events at the theatre are more than most local residents can afford.

If funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting the members of the **Hawai'i State Theatre Council**, which exists to elevate member organizations so that they can better serve the Hawai'i theatre community and, thereby, the community at large.

With Aloha,

Luana Whitford-Mitchell  
Executive Director - Maui OnStage

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:00:18 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marilyn Katzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Rep. Tam and members of the committee

My name is Marilyn Katzman and I am on The Board of Directors for the Hawaii Theatre Center and I'm providing my testimony in support of this bill.

The Theatre had its grand opening on Sept. 6, 1922 and was christened the "Pride of the Pacific" by a local newspaper. It holds a very special place in the cultural fabric of our islands. There has been no other venue of its size and grandeur attempted over the last 100 years. We are very fortunate that volunteers who saw the future vision of the Theatre becoming a cultural arts center were able to save the theatre in the 80's and 90's from demolition thus ensuring the Theatre would be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Today, as a private non-profit organization, the Theatre operates with a mission that includes both the preservation of the Historic Hawaii Theatre building and as the operator of the Hawaii Theatre Center, the State's premier non-profit performing arts venue.

The Hawaii Theatre welcomes a broad range of shows. This past year alone it has welcomed headlining acts like Jefferson Starship, Ronny Chieng, Tom Segura, Blue Oyster Cult, and Stars of the American Ballet. In staying true to our mission to support local performing arts, during the same period we have worked with 28 non-profit organizations to present their shows including Ohana Arts, Ballet Hawaii, Na Maka O Pu'u Wai Aloha, Sounds of Aloha chorus, Hawaii Foundation for Educators, Royal Hawaiian Band, Hawaii LGBTQ Foundation, Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts, Tau Dance and many others. In addition, the Hawaii Theatre recently welcomed the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as Artistic Partners and Company in Residence providing the HSO with a permanent home from which to operate

The Hawaii Theatre's reach is truly statewide

The State of Hawaii has the opportunity to recognize the Hawaii Theatre as the Hawaii State Theatre through this bill. The designation will help to cement the importance of the historic venue in this community and bestow on it the level of recognition that will aid in the securing of funding to support ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the venue.

It's my hope that the legislature will support this act and continue to work with us in partnership for the benefit of the community.

With Aloha,

Marilyn Katzman

Board of Directors

**LATE**

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:00:03 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LAURIE TANOURA	TAG - The Actors' Group	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Esteemed Members of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs;

TAG – The Actors' Group is one of many theaters in Hawai'i who deserves and would benefit greatly from financial support. TAG has been in existence since 1993, providing excellence and diversity in its productions that are inclusive and significant to the community. TAG has consistently produced shows utilizing local talent without the benefit of regular, predictable support from state sources, but solely from ticket sales and donations. TAG also produces a show every year to celebrate Black History Month and is one of the few theatres in the country that has produced all ten of the "Pittsburgh Cycle" plays written by August Wilson all of which are cast with local African American residents.

Due to the pandemic, we have lost almost half of our funding and are still struggling financially.

If funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting all of the members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council, which exists to elevate member organizations so that they can better serve the Hawai'i theatre community and, thereby, the community at large.

Laurie Tanoura

Managing Director, TAG - The Actors' Group

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:48:56 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill which designates the Hawai'i Theatre Center as the Hawai'i State Theatre. Appropriates funds. It is an important historical icon and provides an entertainment venue for the downtown neighborhood as well as the other islands.



**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:29:50 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Virginia Hinshaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to support this bill to support the Hawai'i Theatre both as a private citizen and as a member of the Hawai'i chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters. The Hawai'i Theatre is a major contributor to the arts in Hawai'i and is also an important collaborator with other arts organizations. Supporting this bill will enrich the lives of so many people and enable much needed maintenance of this unique facility. Mahalo for supporting this bill.

**LATE****HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 2:04:59 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean-Joseph T.K. Choo	Individual	Comments	In Person

Comments:

Aloha to the members of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs,

I would like to echo the testimony of Donna Blanchard, President of the Hawaii State Theatre Council:

"While the Hawai'i State Theatre Council recognizes the benefit of The Hawaii Theatre Center in our community, we want to also recognize that Hawaii Theatre Center is one of many theaters in Hawai'i, all of whom deserve and would benefit greatly from financial support.

While the Hawaii Theatre Center's building is historically and architecturally significant, they are a presenting house rather than a producing organization. That is to say they host, rather than create. Much of the work presented there is touring work from the continent that does not reflect the diverse cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The cost of renting the theatre is often prohibitive for local arts organizations and the cost of tickets for events at the theatre are more than most local residents can afford.

If funds are to be appropriated to support theatre in Hawai'i, we hope you will consider supporting the members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council, which exists to elevate member organizations so that they can better serve the Hawai'i theatre community and, thereby, the community at large."

I am encouraged to hear about more opportunities and programs to support local theatrical venues, and performing artists here in Hawai'i. Theatre is a social art form that encourages collaboration and community with the ensemble, a sense of play and complicité with cast, crew, and audience. It is the people who work and run theatres that must also be invested in. It is the work of leaders, like my acting professor the late Dr. Paul Cravath (who worked for decades at Leeward Community College) that instilled a sense of commitment and craft in all the productions and classes he led. It is the work and care he invested in his students like myself and hundreds of others that directly contributed to their success as artists and human beings. In addition to investing in buildings, how do we invest in our artists?

Perhaps usage of spaces in venues like the Convention Center or the Blaisdell or the Hawai'i Theatre occasionally at heavy discount or without charge for a gathering of theatre artists from across the state could be arranged a few times a year to showcase talent from all the islands who are pursuing this form?

In any case, having some sort of designated space to gather as a Hawai'i State Theater community would be wonderful.

Looking forward to future developments and conversations with this committee and other theater leaders in the islands!

Sean-Joseph Choo,

Lead Steward + Head Jester + Primary Theatre Advocate

Kamamo House

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2023

COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, ARTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair Rep. Rose Martinez, Vice Chair

Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett Rep. Jackson D. Sayama Rep. Jeanne Kapela Rep. David Alcos III Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi

Friday, February 10, 2023 9:30 AM  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE Conference Room 309

State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

RE: HB 269

Testimony in Strong Support

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today in strong support for HB 269 which would designate the historic Hawai'i Theater Center as The Hawai'i State Theater.

As a keiki, my father would take me to the movies at the then very run down Hawai'i Theater. Now in its hundreth year, and through the hard work and kokua of many citizens, foundations, businesses, the City and State, the Hawai'i Theater is restored to its former glory. The HTC is now a globally recognized, landmark venue that serves our entire community. It is a building of extraordinary beauty and rivals the great music halls of the continent and Europe.

Today I am proud to serve on the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Theater Center and have seen first hand the delight of our audiences enjoying the broad spectrum of entertainment the HTC presents every week. Just as importantly, the HTC is an essential economic driver for downtown Honolulu and Chinatown, bringing thousands of customers to the many restaurants and shops in the area. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that without the Hawai'i Theater Center, Chinatown and downtown Honolulu at night would suffer grievous economic harm.

But with extraordinary restoration and history come great costs for upkeep and maintenance. Therefore, I applaud the intention of HB 269 to provide this designation and funds to make sure we never lose this priceless and economically vital institution.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this worthy bill!

Chris Lee  
(testifying as a private citizen)

**LATE**

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:00:41 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lanaly Cabalo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a member of the theatre community, I oppose the proposition that the Hawaii Theatre Center be designated Hawaii STATE Theatre. First and foremost, anyone in the theatre industry knows that Hawaii Theatre Center is a venue. It isn't necessarily a theatre in the sense that the many theatre organizations downtown are. It is a venue that gets rented out to show theatre.

Organizations like Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Kumu Kahua Theatre, TAG — The Actor's Group, KOA Theatre are examples of town theatre organizations that produce theatre and are in fact members of the Hawai'i State Theatre Council. Hawaii Theatre Center is not even a member of the council so to allow the Hawaii Theatre Center to be designated Hawaii STATE Theatre is not only misleading to the general public, it is disrespectful to the actual theatre community.

Furthermore, if the desire is to appropriate funds to the theatre community, then it should be delegated to the other programs who actually produce theatre as opposed to rent out the facility.

I am thankful that the arts are on your radar. Let's broaden your understanding of what theatre is and who makes it before giving the Hawaii State Theatre distinction to a venue unworthy of that title.

**LATE**

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:45:49 AM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Pasqua	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB269 RELATING TO THE HAWAII THEATRE CENTER**

Designates the Hawaii Theatre Center as the Hawaii State Theatre. Appropriates funds. Please appropriate funding for the performing arts across the state. State-wide, performing arts centers are struggling post pandemic including neighbor island and rural community center venues that serve the greater public.

**LATE**

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:51:44 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emily McIlroy	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please appropriate funding for the performing arts across the state. State-wide, performing arts centers are struggling post pandemic including neighbor island and rural community center venues that serve the greater public.

**LATE**

**HB-269**

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:52:56 PM

Testimony for CAI on 2/10/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Braddoc DeCaires	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As Production Manager for Manoa Valley Theatre in 2019, MVT rented out the Hawaii Theatre Center for our production of George Takei's "Allegiance". We thought that the Hawaii Theatre would be the perfect place to present this important, poignant show about a dark chapter in American history. Dealing with the theatre was a complete nightmare. There was no theatre to theatre hospitality, no aloha. They treated us like we were just another booking from the mainland. The staff was rude and completely unhelpful.

We raised funds for our show, which Hawaii Theatre was not involved with whatsoever, and Hawaii Theatre told us they wanted a cut of the funds we raised to put on the show. This was on top of the fee to rent the place. They were not producing the show at all. They didn't get a cent but acted like just because we were renting the theatre that they were supposed to get a cut of what we raised for costumes, lights, sound rentals, actors' stipends etc. How does that make any sense?

We even tried to store boxes of our programs to hand out to our audiences at the facility days before the show opened. We were told we had to clean out one of their closets to store the programs. I spent a couple of hours cleaning out their closet of their stored junk to have a secure place to store our boxes of programs. When the show opened, no one at the Hawaii Theatre handed out our programs. We had to do that ourselves despite them saying they would do it. After the show ended, we took back our boxes only for the Production Manager at the time making fun of us for having so many leftover programs!

Now this theatre wants taxpayer money to pay for Gregory Dunn's \$200,000 yearly salary? This theatre should not become a state entity. At the very least, the state should investigate how the Hawaii Theatre Center conducts business and the poor way they treat the local folks that rent their facility.