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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director  
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts**

**Before the  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025 Conference Room 309 at 9:30AM**

**HR\_135/HCR\_141  
REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE  
FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A HAWAII CULTURAL TRUST TO PRESERVE AND  
PROMOTE HAWAII'S CULTURAL RESOURCES.**

Dear Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

The SFCA is pleased to **SUPPORT** H.R. 135/H.C.R. 141 which urges the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to establish working group to study the feasibility of creating a hawaii cultural trust to preserve and promote hawaii's cultural resources.

State legislatures use a mixture of strategies to provide public support for state arts agencies (SAAs). By far the largest state funding source for SAAs—currently and historically—is state general funds. However, state legislatures throughout the continent have enacted a variety of other legislative strategies to provide additional support. Examples of these funding mechanisms include dedicated taxes, sales of specialty license plates, and gaming revenues.

The SFCA supports the investigation into alternate funding sources for culture and arts activities including the establishment of a cultural trust to accept and distribute funding.

The SFCA recommends including members on the task force from the Department of Taxation and the Department of Budget and Finance as the development of a cultural trust would require both departments' input.

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



TESTIMONY OF  
**DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I**  
**Interim President & CEO**  
Hawaii Tourism Authority  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS**  
Wednesday, March 19, 2025  
9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 309

In consideration of  
**HR 135/HCR 141**  
**REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY**  
**OF CREATING A HAWAII CULTURAL TRUST TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE HAWAII'S**  
**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) offers comments on HR 135/HCR 141, which requests establishing a working group to study the feasibility of creating a Hawaii Cultural Trust to preserve and promote Hawaii's cultural resources.

HTA agrees that supporting the preservation and promotion of Hawaii's rich cultural resources is important. This is in alignment with our mandates, which include coordinating the development of new products in collaboration with both public and private sectors, specifically in areas such as culture [HRS §201B-3(a)(28)]. Additionally, we are dedicated to ensuring that Hawaiian cultural practitioners and cultural sites receive the necessary support, nurturing, and engagement to sustain our visitor industry [§201B-3(a)(28)(C)]. Moreover, one of our key target audiences is the "cultural enthusiasts" – mindful travelers interested in the Hawaiian heritage, cultural experiences, and local engagement.

We appreciate having a seat at the table to examine the feasibility of creating a Hawaii Cultural Trust. Should this measure pass, we look forward to working with the legislature and other state entities on this study.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our comments.



# Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission

*Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community*



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March 14, 2025

House's Committee on Culture and the Arts  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

## RE: **Strong Support for House Concurrent Resolution 141 with Requested Amendments**

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 141 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature with the following purpose:

"...to improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government."

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Concurrent Resolution 141, which seeks to establish a working group to explore the feasibility of creating a Hawai'i Cultural Trust to preserve and promote the cultural resources of our islands. Additionally, we respectfully request an **AMENDMENT** to include a representative from the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission and the māhū community in this working group.

As we continue to fight for the preservation of Hawai'i's rich and diverse cultural heritage, it is imperative that the cultural contributions of Hawai'i's māhū, LGBTQIA+, [QTPI+](#), and [MVPFAFF+](#) communities be explicitly included in this critical discussion. Throughout history, these communities have been integral to the cultural, spiritual, and social fabric of Hawai'i, yet they have repeatedly faced erasure. From the Healer Stones of Kapaemahu on Waikīkī Beach—an ancient monument honoring māhū healers whose legacy was nearly forgotten—to the Glades in Chinatown, a legendary space for gender-diverse and LGBTQIA+ expression that shaped modern Hawai'i's cultural landscape, our history is often omitted from mainstream narratives.

The ongoing challenges faced by māhū and LGBTQIA+ communities underscore the urgency of ensuring our representation in cultural preservation efforts. In recent years, we have witnessed the rollback of LGBTQIA+ rights and visibility across various sectors. If we do not take intentional steps to secure our rightful place in the cultural preservation process, we risk further erasure of our identities, histories, and contributions to Hawai'i.

*Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022*

## **HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Strong Support of HCR 141**

The creation of a Hawai'i Cultural Trust presents an unprecedented opportunity to protect and uplift all aspects of Hawai'i's cultural identity. However, a truly inclusive and representative working group is essential to achieving this goal. By amending HCR 141 to include a representative from the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission and the māhū community, the Legislature will affirm its commitment to honoring and preserving the full spectrum of Hawai'i's cultural heritage.

We urge the committee to adopt HCR 141 with this amendment to ensure that our histories and contributions are not only acknowledged but actively preserved and celebrated. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony, and we look forward to working together to advance this important initiative.

Should you or any member of your staff have any questions regarding this testimony you can reach the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission at [hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, and we respectfully ask for your support,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

Vice Chair

[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)



## TESTIMONY FROM THE STONEWALL CAUCUS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS

March 19, 2025

#### Testimony in Strong Support of HCR141 with requested amendments

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and esteemed Members of the Committee:

My name is Abby Simmons, Chair of the Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, and I am testifying on behalf of our Caucus in strong support of HCR141, which calls for the establishment of a working group to study the feasibility of creating a Hawai'i Cultural Trust. This resolution recognizes the profound cultural wealth of our islands and the urgent need for sustainable funding to protect, promote, and perpetuate our diverse cultural resources.

Hawai'i's rich heritage—spanning from Native Hawaiian traditions to the contributions of immigrant communities—deserves dedicated, long-term investment. A cultural trust would provide financial stability for arts, cultural institutions, and historic preservation efforts, ensuring that future generations can continue to learn from and celebrate Hawai'i's unique identity. By examining successful models in other states, this working group would play a critical role in shaping a funding and governance structure that aligns with Hawai'i's needs and values.

#### **Request for Amendment: Inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ and Māhū Communities**

While we fully support the intent of HCR 141, we respectfully request an amendment to expand the representation within the working group by including:

1. A representative from the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission, to ensure that the diverse voices of the LGBTQ+ community—many of whom contribute significantly to Hawai'i's cultural landscape—are included in discussions on cultural preservation.
2. A representative from the māhū community, recognizing the deep-rooted historical and cultural contributions of māhū individuals in Hawaiian society, including in storytelling, hula, healing practices, and the arts.

By including these perspectives, the working group will better reflect the full spectrum of Hawai'i's cultural heritage, ensuring that the proposed trust serves all communities equitably.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I urge the committee to pass HCR 141 with the suggested amendment to create a more inclusive and representative working group.

Respectfully,

Abby Simmons (she/her)  
Chair & SCC Representative  
Stonewall Caucus  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i  
<https://linktr.ee/stonewalldph>