



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 1577, RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 11, 2025      **TIME:** 3:01 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 224

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Alyssa-Marie Y.H. Kau, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts within the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA). The bill also expands SFCA's responsibilities to include the coordination, planning, promotion, marketing, and execution of performing arts events. Further, this bill allows the Works of Art Special Fund (WASF), established by section 103-8.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to be used for works of performing arts.

WASF is generally funded by tax-exempt general obligation bonds. To maintain the tax-exempt status of the general obligation bonds, WASF moneys must be used in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. Under the Internal Revenue Code, tax-exempt general obligation bonds are used for capital projects (with certain exceptions). Using tax-exempt general obligation bond proceeds for operating purposes jeopardizes the tax-exempt status of the bonds. See Treasury Regulation sections 1.148-1(c)(4)(iii) and 1.148-10(a)(4).

To avoid this issue, we recommend deleting section 5 of the bill from page 5, line 15, through page 7, line 4, and adding a new section to chapter 9 to establish a new special fund to account specifically designated for the performing arts events as follows:

1. Amend the prefatory wording for section 2 on page 3, lines 1-3: as follows:

SECTION 2. Chapter 9, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding [a] two new [section] sections to part II to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

2. Add the following provisions after page 3, line 15:

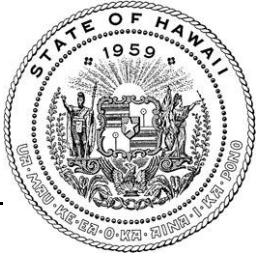
**§9- Performing arts special fund.** There is established in the state treasury the performing arts special fund, to be administered by the foundation. The revenues of the special fund shall consist of:

- (1) Appropriations made by the legislature;
- (2) Revenues or moneys derived from the foundation's operations;
- (3) Grants, gifts, and donations received by the foundation; and
- (4) All interest earned on moneys deposited in the fund.

The special fund shall be used for the coordination, planning, promotion, marketing, and execution of performing arts events.

3. Delete section 5 (page 5, line 15, through page 7, line 4), with subsequent sections renumbered accordingly.

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider our comments. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
DIRECTOR

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND ARTS**

Tuesday, February 11, 2025  
3:01 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
415 South Beretania Street



In consideration of  
**SB1577**  
**RELATING TO CULTURE AND ARTS**

Chair Lee and Vice Chair Inouye and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on SB1577, which establishes within the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) a Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts programs and events, providing critical funding for the coordination, planning, promotion, marketing, and execution of performing arts events throughout our state.

As noted by SFCA, there is concern with Section 5 of the bill, which proposes to amend HRS 103-8.5 to allow the Works of Art Special Fund to be expanded to include performing arts initiatives. While a general fund infusion of \$1,000,000 for this purpose is important, we understand that due to the nature of the funding sources of HRS 103-8.5, this prohibits the use of the existing special fund for this initiative. A separate, general fund appropriation for a Performing Arts Grants Program would achieve the intent of the measure in supporting performing arts throughout our state.

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



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

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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  
Tuesday , February 11, 2025 Conference Room 224 at 3:01PM  
SENATE BILL 1577  
RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Chair Lee and members of the Committee,  
The SFCA **SUPPORTS** S.B.1577 which establishes the Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts in the State; Clarifies the scope of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' responsibilities to include the coordination, planning, promotion, marketing, and execution of performing arts events; Appropriates funds to provide grants under the Performing Arts Grants Program.

The performing arts in Hawaii are a vital part of our community and currently receive SFCA support through General Fund appropriations from the legislature and Federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Performing Arts, including cultural presentations, represent 43% of total Biennium Grants awards and 72% of total Artists in the Schools projects.

There is concern with Section 5 which amends 103-8.5 HRS to allow the use of the Works of Art Special Fund for performing arts. Based on discussions with the Attorney General's Office on what is allowable and not permissible, the amendment of 103-8.5 HRS proposed in H.B.1378 to support performing arts would not be appropriate. While there is a great demand for the SFCA to support initiatives outside of the parameters of HR103-8.5 including performing arts, the fund does not allow for the broad use due to its source as bond revenue.

The State through the SFCA has an established funding pathway for Performing Arts through its Federally funded positions managing the grants programs. SFCA recommends the legislature establish an annual performing arts general fund appropriation of \$1,000,000 to the SFCA to be distributed to performing arts organizations and performing arts learning centers statewide through a process with criteria developed by the SFCA in consultation with the performing arts organizations.

With respect to managing Hawaii culture, education and community grants and programs, the SFCA requests the 4.5 FTE Federally funded positions be funded with \$384,426 in State general funds.

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

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:36:21 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Wong	Testifying for Hawaii Youth Symphony	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

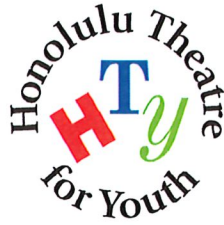
The Performing Arts are extremely important the livelihood and well being of our society, and I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill on behalf of young people throughout our state.

A community with a vibrant arts & cultural presence is one that inspires, one that encourages growth mindset, introspection, and connectedness—and uplifts us all, while bringing joy to our everyday lives.

With the doors to a creative economy opened, we can optimize outcomes for the wealth of ~~IP~~ creativity we have here in Hawaii. In a world where too often we hold our feelings in, the arts are a public allowance, an invitation, to *feel*; and historically, a recognition of where we've been and where we have yet to go.

Many students have shared with us how music and the arts are a source of healing and resilience—especially for young people who have grown up through the Pandemic and continue to get inundated with negative news, both around us and from around the world through the 24/7 digital drumbeat.

I'm reminded how MUSIC is the first; a visceral and intrinsic, almost impulsive source of healing in difficult times. Yo-Yo Ma played solo cello for NYFD after 9/11; Jake Shimabukuro and friends held a benefit concert just days after the Maui wildfires; and during the Pandemic, people went onto their balconies, to sing and be united through music in the spirit, comfort, and care for the nurses and hospital workers. The undeniable connection, escape, and comfort we take in music, is among the most certain, most healthy, and most beautiful things in this world. Please help us to preserve and protect opportunities for performing artists, by which, you will also be encouraging our youth to dream and grow through the performing arts.



February 10, 2025

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*Director of Drama Education*

Dear Legislators-

This year Honolulu Theatre for Youth is celebrating 70 years of providing engaging and exciting live theatre and classroom activities for Hawaii's children. Support received from the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts has made it possible for HTY to keep arts education alive in schools across the State of Hawaii and enables students in even the most remote areas of Hawaii access to the arts.

I strongly urge you to support SB1577 and companion bill HB 1378 which will continue and strengthen the important funding for The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our support of this legislation.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Rebecca Dunning", is written over the typed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rebecca Dunning  
Managing Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Eric Johnson", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Eric Johnson  
Artistic Director

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:45:49 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
TREVOR ARNHOLT	Testifying for Fuzz Box Productions	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am in full support of this GOOD bill , SB 1577 which would appropriate additional funding to the SFCA to administer support for performing arts grants.

I live in Lahaina and lost my house in the 2023 wild fires. Also, my business has been greatly effected as well. And I saw many others in my community here effected by the fire. We need funding for the arts and communtiy activities right now more than ever. We need to rebuild creative spaces for the people, the kids, and families to have places for them to go to to have art in their lives.

Mahalo, Trevor

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:55:21 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vania Jerome	Testifying for LAHAINA MUSIC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Vania Jerome. I have been a music educator on Maui for 27 years and have also served the community as a musical director for numerous theater productions across the island as well as a musician (pianist and singer) for multiple orchestras, chamber ensembles, choirs, and in the convention and wedding circuit. As a resident and business owner of and in Lahaina, I have experienced the struggle to keep arts education and performance alive. I have work with grassroots organizations to provide arts education to our keiki with very little funding. I have seen the impact of what these programs have done for our community. Our keiki feel seen and accepted, and their confidence and self worth is built up in a nurturing and positive community. I know first hand the life saving impact that the arts have played, especially after the devastating wildfire of Lāhainā. My husband and I lost our family owned business along with almost all of our personal instruments. It was music and sharing music with others that helped carry us through that horrible time. Last year, as the Director of Arts at Maui Preparatory Academy, I witnessed the healing power of art in my students as they created beautiful and tragic art to express their pain, sorrow, and hope, as well as those who shared their talent on stage in musical performances that brought our entire community together by providing free tickets to anyone who wanted to attend. My husband volunteered to teach free 'ukulele lessons to those affected by the fire who wanted, and we saw how it instantly brought joy to so many people who seemed hopeless. We need more arts to help heal our island and our people.



**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:57:34 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra McGee	Testifying for Kona Dance and Performing Arts	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a teaching artist on the roster of the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (HSFCA), I strongly support Bill SB 1577 because it represents a significant opportunity to expand access to arts education in Hawaii's schools. With my experience teaching dance in local schools, I have seen firsthand how dance fosters creativity, discipline, and personal growth among students. This bill would provide the necessary funding and resources to ensure that every student, regardless of their background, has access to high-quality dance programs. By supporting SB 1577, we can help create an inclusive educational environment where the arts are valued and every student has the chance to explore their artistic potential.

Moreover, Bill SB 1577 would help to preserve and promote Hawaii's cultural heritage through dance education. As a teaching artist, I believe it is crucial to pass on our traditions and art forms to the next generation, and this bill will help ensure that dance remains a vital part of our community. It will not only create opportunities for students to learn dance but also provide them with the tools to understand and appreciate the diverse cultural influences that shape our local identity. By supporting this bill, we can nurture young talent, enrich Hawaii's artistic landscape, and ensure that future generations continue to carry forward our unique cultural legacy.

Mahalo for your time!

Debra McGee

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:03:14 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lin McEwan (Thieman)	Testifying for ProArts Playhouse Maui (ProArts Inc)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Hawai`i State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB1577 broad funding for the performing arts across the State and through SFCA. The arts play an essential role in the cultural, social, and economic fabric of our state, and continued investment in this sector is crucial for its growth and vitality.

**Cultural Heritage and Community Engagement**

Hawaii is home to a diverse and rich cultural heritage. The arts—whether through traditional Hawaiian music, dance, visual arts, or contemporary practices—serve as a reflection of our unique identity. They create spaces for people to connect with their history, celebrate their culture, and share stories across generations. Arts funding helps preserve and promote our heritage, allowing both residents and visitors to experience and appreciate the beauty of Hawaiian culture in dynamic ways.

**Economic Impact**

The arts are not just an expression of creativity; they also represent a significant economic driver. Creative industries in Hawaii contribute to local economies through tourism, job creation, and the support of small businesses, including theaters and other performance spaces. Artists, performers, educators, and creatives across the state rely on arts funding to bring their work to life and ensure the sustainability of their businesses. In addition, art-driven tourism attracts visitors, which directly benefits our hospitality and retail sectors.

**Education and Youth Development**

Supporting arts funding also supports our youth. The arts provide a unique way for students to engage with their education and develop essential life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. When the arts are integrated into schools, students thrive in environments that encourage creativity and innovation. Through programs that provide art education, young people can explore their own talents, build confidence, and discover pathways to professional careers in the arts, fostering both personal and community growth.

**Social and Emotional Well-being**

In times of uncertainty, the arts have a profound ability to heal and unite communities. They provide an outlet for self-expression, encourage emotional resilience, and promote mental well-

being. By funding arts initiatives, we ensure that residents—especially in underserved communities—have access to transformative experiences that improve their quality of life.

**Conclusion**

In light of the manifold benefits to our economy, culture, youth, and well-being, I urge the Hawaii State Legislature to continue and increase its investment in the arts. By doing so, you will support the growth of a vibrant, inclusive, and creative community that is essential for the prosperity of our state.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your continued dedication to enriching Hawaii through the arts.

Sincerely,

Lin McEwan (Linda Thieman), Executive Director

ProArts Playhouse Maui

808-463-6550, [lin@proartsmaui.org](mailto:lin@proartsmaui.org)

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:41:15 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrew Morgan	Testifying for Hawai'i Opera Theatre	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The arts make a community. The arts are the reflection of our humanity and make for better, and more engaged citizens. Arts education raises grades and reduces dropout rates. And there are very few industries that were harder hit by the pandemic.

Despite that vital role, spending on the arts represents a tiny fraction of state and federal spending each year. And the arts are currently under attack at the federal level, making it even more vital that the state step in as much as possible to help fill the gap.

Hawai'i Opera Theatre (HOT) was founded in 1961 as part of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, and established as an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation in 1980. Over the years, we have presented over 175 productions and reached hundreds of thousands of keiki through our statewide, critically acclaimed education programs.

But like arts institutions nationwide, and especially locally, HOT is approaching an existential crisis. Arts coverage by local media has evaporated entirely. Coming out of Covid, we faced additional hurdles by the closure of our longtime venue, the Neal S. Blaisdell Concert Hall, due to renovations. Now, we are facing the possible elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts. At the very least, that department is facing pressure to only fund programs in so-called red states.

We are not alone in our struggles.

Don't let the arts die in Hawai'i. Please commit to increased funding to ensure the arts continue to be a vital part of our community for this generation and for generations to come.

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:17:46 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carlynn M Wolfe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Arts are essential in our society. I have been so proud to be a resident of Hawaii and our strong support for the Arts and culture. We have outstanding performing arts practitioners here - people who live Aloha and are willing to share their work with this. I'm hopeful Government will continue to support all the arts to continue making our State the wonderful place it is.

Mahalo,

Carlynn Wolfe

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:23:52 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julie Matheis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Taking any funding away from the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts would be detrimental to all of Hawaii. Please stop trying to redirect any of the funds they are entitled to.

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:38:11 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lynn Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB1577.

The arts have always been an important part of any healthy society. Hawaii has wonderful art support in the past and this should continue and even increase. Keep the art strong with funding!

Me ke aloha,

Lynn Young

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:40:12 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members:

I am writing in **strong support** of SB 1577, which would authorize a performance arts grants program under the State Foundation of Culture and the Arts.

Performance arts could include or incorporate key aspects of Native Hawaiian culture, and this support would benefit kama'āina and visitors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:49:19 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deborah G. Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Now, more than ever, local artists need support from their state officials and museums. PLease support this bill

ALOHA

My name is Gunda Nollenberger, and I am writing today as a citizen to testify in support of SB 1577 `Relating to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts`.

As I understand it, the proposed wording of S.B. No. 1577 emphasizes the mission of the state foundation on culture and the arts to promote, perpetuate, preserve, and encourage culture and the arts as central to the quality of life and people in Hawaii. One of the priorities includes increasing public accessibility to arts and culture.

This bill establishes the Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts in the State. On top of that, it clarifies the scope of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' responsibilities to include the coordination, planning, promotion, marketing, and execution of performing arts events and allows the use of moneys from the Works of Art Special Fund for performing arts. Furthermore, it appropriates funds to provide grants under the Performing Arts Grants Program.

Firsthand, I experience how excited our community is, whether they are artists or people enjoying the works of art, to get together at Capitol Modern's special events. The aim is to support, promote, and recognize the excellence of the State's diverse artists; create, display, and maintain in public places and the state art museum a collection of works of art that represent the diversity and excellence of the State's artistic expression.

Giving artists the opportunity to present their work and audiences to experience creative ideas expressed in art forms makes our world as a whole, and Hawaii in particular, a culturally richer place. Art is not always tangible, but it inspires people in so many different ways. We need innovative concepts to explore new avenues to move forward, think outside the box, and feel positive about the place we all share and most of us call home. From my experience, museums are places of interest when filled with people (life!) who get to meet artists and get involved with the arts, including events after hours. Buildings, rooms and walls provide the platform for conversation.

The arts cannot exist in a space that lacks an outlet to give it expression. It is an important landscape providing enriching experiences with the arts.

We are in desperate need of vision and visionaries.

MAHALO

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:14:25 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra Pozin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is a vital part of the community to appropriate additional funding to the SFCA to administer support for performing arts grants. After the Lahaina Fires it is essential towards revitalizing Maui

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:44:12 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amber Seelig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The arts on Maui are very precious to myself and many others. I personally participate in community theatre, and it has brought me another reason to go on with my life- so when I see that the arts are struggling, I start to worry. I know that I'm not the only one who lives through the arts. We need them to foster our communities and bring people the spark of hope that so many are missing in recent times. This bill will be a worthy cause. Without the arts on this island, people are gonna go bonkers.

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:32:27 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolann Biederman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of to SB1577. I write as a resident who is deeply nurtured and inspired by the creativity of the local artists and nonprofit arts and culture organizations in our state.

The richness and diversity of the arts in Hawai‘i – music, dance, visual arts, Hawaiian culture, media, crafts – impressed and inspired me from the day I arrived 38 years ago and I have supported the arts locally ever since. I've worked as a consultant to the nonprofit sector for the past 25 years in the areas of executive transition, grant writing, special events, and project management. Many of my clients are performing arts organizations. Through first-hand experience, I can say without reservation that funding that enhances the SFCA’s vital grant-making programs supports so many wonderful artistic partnerships that enrich, educate and uplift student and general audiences throughout the state.

The SFCA must continue to have flexibility to distribute resources that support visual and performing artists and cultural practitioners who turn creative dreams into realities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Carolann Biederman, 44-391 Nilu St. #4, Kaneohe, HI 96744

[cabc.consulting@gmail.com](mailto:cabc.consulting@gmail.com)

February 10, 2025

Testimony on SB1577, RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine Inouye  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante  
Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha  
Senator Samantha DeCorte

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts:

My name is Mary Midkiff Fiedler. I am writing as an individual, and not on behalf of any organization.

My father, Bob Midkiff, was a dedicated supporter of the arts in Honolulu and raised funds for the Hawaii Theatre, the Symphony, and was, with Spark Matsunaga, the co-chair to select the architect for this illustrious building, the State Capitol, and many other worthy causes.

His cousin by marriage, Sarah Marks Richards, was for many years the head of the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts, and my father wholly supported this worthy organization.

I sing in the choir at St. Andrew's Cathedral, and this small aspect of performing arts makes me very happy and engaged. I know how important it is for people to participate in art. My grandchildren take art classes at Lincoln Elementary School, but to supplement their once-a-week class, they also take ukulele lessons, extra art classes, and spend part of Saturdays learning to sing with the Hawaii Youth Opera Chorus.

Art, whether performing, visual, auditory, or making traditional Hawaiian crafts, is too valuable to be relegated to the General Fund. We all need art to make us grow and to be human beings capable of thought and joy.

Performing arts bring great joy, both to performers and to audiences. Arts stimulate creativity and thought processes. The amount of time I put in each week to practice my choir music is significant, but the end result means a more beautiful, if transient, product. In the choir aspect, each member of the choir must use his or her talents to make a glorious whole. In a theatre performance, everyone works with everyone else to make a memorable production. The same goes for orchestras and chamber music.

There are so many benefits to performing arts – parental involvement, the joy of performance, and the development of skills, both intellectual and creative.

I wholly support this bill. Thank you for hearing it.

Aloha,

Mary Midkiff Fiedler

Testimony in Support of SB1577  
Relating to the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts  
Establishes the Performing Arts Grants Program  
Allows the use of moneys from the Works of Art Special Fund for performing arts.

Testimony submitted by: Susan Browne  
February 10, 2025

Thank you for advancing this bill that will put the performing arts on the same level as visual arts in Hawai'i. I encourage you to pass this bill. I am a commissioner on the board of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and have worked for many years in arts education. It is a dream come true to include the performing arts in the Art in Public Places program. Thank you for your leadership and vision.

*Susana Browne*

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:42:47 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elisabeth Mather	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the establishment of a performing arts grant program. Hawaii has a rich culture of performing arts--this is what makes us who we are. We have a lot of local programming for visual arts, but performing arts geared towards adults and not just children are surprisingly sparse and hard to access. Creating funding for performing arts should be prioritized.



**LATE**

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:59:24 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maile Loo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and honorable members of the Committee,

I am writing to **strongly support SB1577**, which creates a program and appropriates funds for the performing arts in Hawai‘i.

As Executive Director of a cultural heritage non-profit here in Hawai‘i, and a Kumu Hula, I can speak firsthand to the power of performing arts that are woven into the cultural, educational, and economic fabric of Hawai‘i. Support of this bill means investing in the future of our children, our community, and our living, breathing, rich island heritage.

I kindly request the committee pass this bill so that the diverse performance-based arts that greatly enrich our island communities can continue to impact generations to come.

Mahalo nui loa,

Maile Loo

**LATE**

**SB-1577**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:31:09 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/11/2025 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nawahine Lanzilotti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Nawahine Lanzilotti. I am a performing artist and greatly support the passing of SB1577 (and its partner bill HB1378).

As a current fellow with the National Collaborative on Health Equity and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, I work through education, organizational development training, performance, and the running of a local arts nonprofit to advance health through the arts in our local community.

Evidence shows that a diverse and robust artist community contributes is essential for a resilient economy that is also responsive to the needs of our community.

Locally, performing arts organizations' revenue have still not returned to pre-COVID-19 numbers. According to state reports, performing arts organizations make the least amount from their service revenue and simultaneously locally performing arts receive the least amount of state funding ("State Foundation for Culture and the Arts 2023 Annual Report"). Furthermore, performing arts work is limited to a few industries such as tourism and film & tv production. According to CNHA data, Native Hawaiian musicians who work in these industries make less per dollar than their non-Hawaiian counterparts (\$.92).

For far too long, the performing arts have been cut off from state support. This bill would go a long way in building resilience not only for our performing artists but for our entire state economy.

Best–

Nawahine Lanzilotti