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Honolulu, HI 96813

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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025 Conference Room 309 at 10:00AM**

**HOUSE BILL 1378
RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Dear Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

The SFCA SUPPORTS H.B.1378 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.

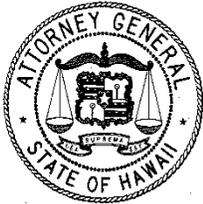
The performing arts in Hawaii are a vital part of our community and currently receive SFCA support through General Fund appropriations from the legislature and Federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Performing Arts, including cultural presentations, represent 43% of total Biennium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



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

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1378, RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS

DATE: Friday, February 7, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

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

Chair Kapela 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

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Friday, February 7, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street

In consideration of
HB1378
RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on HB1378, which seeks to establish a Performing Arts Grants Program as part of the Works of Art Special Fund and expands the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' (SFCA) responsibilities to include support for performing arts events. This measure recognizes that performing arts are vital to Hawaii's rich cultural identity and deserve dedicated support alongside visual arts programs.

While DBEDT supports the bill's intent, after conferring with SFCA, we respectfully request an amendment in Section 5, which proposes to modify HRS 103-8.5 to allow the Works of Art Special Fund to include funding for performing arts initiatives. We understand that as this fund derives from bond revenue, its use must remain within the specific parameters as noted by the SOH Attorney General's Office.

Considering this issue, establishing a separate funding mechanism for a Performing Arts Grants Program in the agency would also achieve the intended goals of this measure. This approach would preserve the integrity of the Works of Art Special Fund while still achieving the bill's intent of providing a new funding mechanism for supporting Hawai'i's performing arts community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:11:41 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Lindley	Maui Pops Orchestra Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Support for State Funding of the Performing Arts in Hawai‘i

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I write in strong support of the establishment of the Performing Arts Grant Program in Hawai‘i. Our performing arts are not merely entertainment – they are vital threads in the cultural fabric of our islands, supporting both our tourism economy and our unique cultural heritage, as well as enriching the lives of all who participate whether on stage or in the audience.

Economic Impact

The performing arts sector significantly contributes to Hawai‘i's economy. Traditional performances, music festivals, and theatrical productions draw visitors and residents alike, extending hotel stays and increasing visitor spending. Before the pandemic, the nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$205.6 million in total economic activity in the City and County of Honolulu alone, supporting 5,968 full-time equivalent jobs and generating \$23.2 million in state and local government revenue.

Education and Youth Development

Performing arts programs in our schools and communities provide critical benefits to Hawai‘i's youth:

- Enhanced academic performance and higher graduation rates
- Development of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills
- Increased self-confidence and cultural identity
- Greater sense of community connection and civic engagement

Community Resilience

Investment in performing arts creates:

- Stable employment for cultural practitioners and artists
- Opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Stronger community bonds through shared cultural experiences
- Enhanced mental health and social wellbeing through artistic expression

Return on Investment

Every dollar invested in the performing arts generates multiple returns through:

- Direct economic activity from performances and festivals

- Indirect spending in surrounding businesses
- Tax revenue from cultural tourism
- Reduced social service costs through youth engagement programs
- Enhanced quality of life that attracts knowledge workers and businesses

Conclusion

Hawai'i's performing arts sector is a crucial economic and cultural asset that merits robust state support. Strategic investment in this sector will strengthen our economy, preserve our cultural heritage, and enhance our communities' wellbeing. I urge you to support increased funding for performing arts programs across our islands.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lindley, Executive Director of Maui Pops Orchestra and Professional Musician



CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE

February 5, 2025

PO Box 670, Kailua, HI 96734 • tel 808.262.0110
cflaharty@iona360.com • www.iona360.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Nova Arts Foundation

TO: Hawai'i State Legislature
RE: Support for HB1378 / SB1577 Relating to the SFCA

Michael North
Vice President

Aloha,

Judy Bishop
Treasurer

Rai Saint Chu
Secretary

Lisa Maria Priester
Ron Porter
Peter Carlisle

I am the founder and Artistic Director of IONA Contemporary Dance Theatre (a dba of the 501c-3 Nova Arts Foundation.) Since 1990, IONA has been a leader in the Hawai'i dance community presenting over 1,000 performances ranging from theatrical productions, to site-specific pieces, to corporate events, in addition to classes and outreach to at-risk communities. IONA's mission is to effect a positive change in the community while providing opportunities for artists to evolve. Our dances connect audiences to such global concerns as the environment, multiculturalism, religious tolerance, equal rights, or domestic violence. Our belief that barriers such as poverty, criminal records, disability, and lack of access to the arts should not limit anyone's access to beauty and wonder.

ADVISORS

Burton White
Jean E. Rolles
Kelly Sanders
Philip J. Shaw
Olivier Urbain

I am writing in support of HB1378 / SB1577 and the SFCA's establishment of the Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts in the State. I am also in support of the use of moneys from the Works of Art Special Fund for performing arts.

IONA FOUNDER &
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Cheryl Flaharty

This year, IONA is celebrating 35 years of outstanding artistry in our community, yet after a challenging pandemic and an even more challenging economy, we are struggling to keep our doors open. In fact, the dance community at large is finding it more difficult to create and perform live theatrical works due to the rising cost of rehearsal and performance space and technical expenses. Ticket income can no longer come even close to covering the expense of creating and staging contemporary dance in Hawai'i and taking a show to another island in order to build audiences is nearly inconceivable with today's cost of airfare and freight. Furthermore, Hawai'i's biggest live theatre audiences today have a mean age of 56 years, and there is much concern that future generations, used to getting their entertainment online, will all together abandon live theatre productions.

The SFCA's Performing Arts Grants Program will provide much needed assistance to a variety of Hawai'i performing artists to create and stage work that will continue to positively impact our community and bring people together. This program must be funded if we are to keep the diversity of our performing arts alive in our beautiful state! PLEASE SUPPORT THIS BILL!

Mahalo nui loa,

Cheryl Flaharty
Artistic Director, IONA

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:04:35 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Feb 5, 2025

Supporting the Bill HB1378

Dear Whom I May Concern:

I fully support the proposed bill, HB1378 to create a Performing Arts Grant Program. I'm an independent multidisciplinary artist and teaching artist based on Hawaii Island. As an independent artist, I create, collaborate and work with different arts organizations in the state of Hawaii. As a teaching artist, I provide arts integrated residencies through the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts' (HSFCA) arts education program called Artists in the Schools (AITS) Program. The program offers arts integrated residencies to public and charter schools in the State of Hawaii. Arts integrated residencies provide valuable learning opportunities and experiences for students to learn and express not only arts but also other core subjects, such as reading, math, science, and other subjects in more holistic approaches.

This proposed bill will not only support performing artists and organizations but also other non-arts sectors and organizations that provide various services and programs in partnership with performing arts sectors to create more innovative and enriching programs to make arts more accessible to many people in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Kim

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:30:19 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felix Gottdiener	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. We need more funding for artists and especially live music.

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:21:13 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin L	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii's culture can not be sustained solely by objects held in a collection or museum. Culture is a living form that also exists by performing with a live audience. In an online world so disconnected from one another, it is vital to allow performers to engage with the community and receive equal support from the state as visual artist do. Please consider providing grant money to allow performers to create new and original work. Mahalo.

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:18:43 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the members of the Committee,

I support this legislation to support the public arts in Hawaii. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

David Ball, Waialae-Kahala

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:11:45 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan C. Browne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1378

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 6, 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.



HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:47:59 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Meyer	Castle Performing Arts Learning Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1378 to provide funding for the performing arts. We at Castle are known for our excellent educational performing arts program, recognized nationally and internationally, and yet we still struggle with funding and serious threats to our budgets. We serve hundreds of students in elementary, intermediate, and high school across Oahu, but we are only one of dozens of public school performing arts programs that would be grateful for any kind of increased funding support, even the chance at a grant for one of our programs! The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts has been a solid source of support for our performing arts programs through the years and we urge you to help them help us!

This is funding that keeps on giving- for we are creating the next generation of artists enriching all our lives! Thank you for your consideration.

Karen Meyer, Director

Castle Performing Arts Learning Center

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:58:38 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Satoru Kong, and Members of the Committee on Culture & Arts,

My name is Jen Cox and I am Haiku resident on the island of Maui. I am in Support of HB1378 that supports performing arts in the State and allows the use of moneys from the Works of Art Special Fund for performing arts.

As a lifelong dancer, I have seen and experienced the power of the performing arts to help build understanding between artists and audiences, tell stories that move our minds and our hearts, and connect us to one another as fellow human beings. Performances bring people together who might otherwise not find any reason to gather and fosters connections in their shared experience. Public funding allows the performing arts to become increasingly accessible to more of us, so we can all share in these thought-provoking, emotionally stimulating, and inspiring experiences.

Please Support HB1378; mahalo for your consideration,

Jen Cox
Haiku, HI 96708

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:58:53 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angel Prince	Prince Dance Company	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning. My name is Angel Prince and I am the Executive Director of Prince Dance Company, a 501c3 contemporary dance company based on the island of Hawaii. Our mission is to enrich the lives of the people of Hawaii and the world by creating [thought-provoking theatrical dance works](#) which challenge and inspire its audiences and by ensuring all keiki/youth who want to learn and perform in the performing arts have the opportunity.

Our company provides jobs and opportunities for over 50 artists working and living in Hawaii, it brings art and art education to over 3000 students each year, we have performed for thousands of audience members in our 15-year history and created 20+ original performances for the stage.

This bill to establish a performing arts grant in Hawaii is exactly the type of support we need to continue to have a thriving performing arts community in Hawaii. We know that art enriches lives, that it builds and strengthens communities, it increases longevity, improves social and emotional well-being and studies show access to the arts increases positive educational outcomes in school children.

So while the arts are an economic driver they are also vital for our health and our community's vitality. The arts are notoriously underfunded but so desperately needed. So many talented young people leave the state every year to look for work on the continent because there aren't enough opportunities here. A Performing Arts grant would not only help companies like Prince Dance Company continue to do the important work we are doing but also allow these young talents to stay in Hawaii.

We give our full support to this bill to provide much-needed funding to our performing artists who help make Hawaii the healthy and vibrant state that it is and can continue to be.

Thank you for your time,

Angel Prince

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:22:07 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Dunn	Hawaii Theatre Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the operator of one of the largest independent non-profit performing arts venues in the state, the Hawaii Theatre enthusiastically supports this bill. In the state of Hawaii, the Hawaii Community Foundation reported in a recent study that less than 3% of all charitable and public support goes to fund the arts. When support for the performing arts is further analyzed, an even smaller pool of funding is available to provide our arts and cultural practitioners with funding to continue their craft, and bring alive the cultural essence of our community. We feel strongly that the state should take a leadership role in advancing the importance of the performing arts through this legislative action and to provide a dedicated source of funding to compensate performers, fund performance venues and help advance the visibility of performances through marketing and education. Mahalo for your consideration. Gregory Dunn, President & CEO of the Hawaii Theatre Center

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:29:37 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I am a performing artist and performing arts organizer in Hawai'i, and also a previous recipient of the SFCA Folk Arts Apprenticeship Award.

HB1378 is a welcome addition to the scope of SFCA's work. Beyond the interpretation of visual artwork through performance that SFCA has been supporting, direct support of performing arts activities would make an enormous impact in projects involving preservation, innovation, and collaboration across Hawai'i's multicultural landscape. Broadening the scope of support will grow and sustain generations of Hawai'i-based artists by providing opportunities to learn, teach, create and connect with communities to inspire and enrich lives.

The Works of Art Special Fund was landmark legislation when introduced, inspiring governments around the world to pass similar legislation to support and sustain arts in their communities. HB1378 would bring the scope of support more in line with similar contemporary laws that provide for arts of all forms.

HB1378 would have a transformational impact on communities across the pae 'āina. Please give this bill your highest consideration for approval. Mahalo for your time and service.

Eric Chang

Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:34:12 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Conley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill so that artists can continue to create work that connects us and enriches our community. Mahalo!

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:35:16 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Kekoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a citizen of the state of Hawaii, Honolulu county, I fully support funding for performing arts for our community. The state and DOE has done so much damage with not supporting arts (performing and visual arts) in the schools and in the community. This has caused little creativity and ways of expression for the youth in our community. Its such a missed opportunity of only concentraing on STEM over the years and given very little pathways for success for our youth in creative fields. Also, as our community ages, we need to find creative outlets for the senior members of our community. We need to enhance the mind's engagement in life.

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:46:43 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to let you know that I am very thankful for HB1378, which is seeking to appropriate funds for performing arts grants. The performing arts are not only a cornerstone of our cultural identity but also a significant driver of economic growth and community development.

Economic Impact of the Performing Arts

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, arts and cultural economic activity accounted for 4.3% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), totaling \$1.10 trillion in 2022.

The National Endowment for the Arts reported that in 2021, performing arts presenters contributed over \$14.3 billion to the economy, marking a 122% increase from the previous year and surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

Furthermore, the nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$166.3 billion in economic activity in 2015, supporting 4.6 million jobs and generating \$27.5 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments—a yield well beyond their collective \$5 billion in arts allocations.

Community and Educational Benefits

Beyond economic contributions, the performing arts play a vital role in community cohesion and education. Studies have shown that engagement in the arts enhances academic achievement, fosters creativity, and promotes social and emotional development among students. Communities with vibrant arts scenes often experience increased tourism, improved quality of life, and greater civic engagement.

Investing in the performing arts through HB1378 is an investment in our state's economic vitality and the well-being of our communities. By appropriating funds for performing arts grants, we not only support artists and cultural organizations but also stimulate economic growth, enrich education, and strengthen the social fabric of our society.

I urge you to pass HB1378 and affirm your commitment to the enduring value of the performing arts in our state.

Resources:

bea.gov

arts.gov

americansforthearts.org

Thank you for your consideration.

Maki Morinoue

Holualoa, HI

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:19:03 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Winston French	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.



**Hawai'i Alliance
for Arts
Education
dba Hawai'i Arts
Alliance**

**Statement in Strong Support of HB 1378 – Performing Arts
Grants Program**

February 6, 2025

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gaye Humphrey, and I am writing to express my **strong support** for **HB 1378**, which seeks to establish a **Performing Arts Grants Program** under the **State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA)**.

The performing arts are a vital part of Hawai'i's cultural identity, serving as a powerful medium for storytelling, education, and community engagement. By expanding SFCA's role to include the coordination, promotion, and execution of performing arts events, this bill ensures that **all artistic disciplines**—visual and performing—receive the recognition and financial backing they deserve.

This bill comes at a crucial time. The performing arts industry continues to face challenges due to fluctuating funding and economic uncertainty. With **dedicated grants** and **expanded SFCA support**, HB 1378 will:

- Provide **direct financial assistance** to local artists and arts organizations.
- Expand **public access** to high-quality performances across Hawai'i.
- Support **diverse cultural expressions** through dance, music, theater, and more.
- Strengthen **Hawai'i's creative economy**, benefiting artists, educators, and the tourism industry.

Investing in the arts is an investment in our **people, heritage, and future**. I urge the committee to **pass HB 1378** and help secure long-term sustainability for Hawai'i's vibrant performing arts community.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gaye Humphrey
Executive Director
Hawai'i Arts Alliance

P.O. Box 3948
Honolulu, Hawai'i
96812-3948
Phone: (808) 533-2787
Fax: (808) 526-9040
arts@hawaiiartsalliance.org

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:04:07 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Johnson	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

As an Alumnus and current long term substitute for the Castle Performing Arts Center I support the measure to fund performing arts. CPAC is a vital part of its local community and consistently has a diverse range of students who excel academically and in their extracurriculars. While the program is successful, award-winning on the national scale, and prestigious (CPAC is consistently invited to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival), we always need funds. For example, as the program was unsure about next years funds, the second high school play this year was canceled. Castle's thespian club have taken upon themselves to put on a second show this year with funding through grants and the club's own money. If the performing arts had more funding, we would not need to cancel shows to save money or put caution tape around theatre seats that have not been fixed in years.

6th February 2025

Representative Jeanne Kapela

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street Room 418
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Support of HB1378

Dear Representative Kapela,

I am a lifelong resident of Maui County who appreciates your dedicated leadership and community mindedness as Chair of the House Committee on Culture & Arts. I am writing in strong support of HB 1378 which establishes the Performing Arts Grants Program to support performing arts in our State and will clarify 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, ensuring that comprehensive and all-inclusive arts and culture opportunities thrive in Hawai'i.

Recently retired after 42 years of service as a public school teacher, I have spent my life working in and advocating for the arts, particularly secondary arts education. My visual arts students have been the grateful beneficiaries of the SFCA's varied programs over many years. I have witnessed how the valuable experiences provided to students by these opportunities to meet and work with professional artists and private organizations extended learning far beyond the walls of the classroom and deep into the community.

I am currently serving my second term as the Maui commissioner on the Board of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. I have been impressed with what I am learning in regard to the breadth and scope of how the SFCA works tirelessly to positively impact every community member on **every** island and the significant strides set into motion by our lawmakers to support this important work.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Janet Sato

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:58:16 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meredith Bechirian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an island community rich in cultural diversity and history, the arts play a vital role in preserving and sharing our unique heritage while enriching the lives of both residents and visitors.

The performing arts—whether in theater, dance, music, or other forms—serve as a vital expression of who we are as a people. From our traditional Hawaiian hula to contemporary performances, the arts help connect generations, telling stories that highlight our shared experiences and values.

Furthermore, performing arts programs serve as a powerful educational tool. They provide young people with opportunities to learn discipline, creativity, and teamwork. For many students, participating in these programs offers them a sense of belonging and an outlet for self-expression. However, without proper funding, many schools and local organizations cannot offer these opportunities or cannot maintain existing programs.

In addition, the performing arts are an important economic driver for Hawai‘i. They support local jobs, promote tourism, and draw audiences both locally and from around the world. Grants can help ensure that these programs not only continue but thrive, attracting more visitors to our islands and giving artists the resources they need to create and perform.

It is clear that the arts are essential to the cultural, educational, and economic fabric of Hawai‘i. By supporting performing arts programs through grants, we are investing in the future of our community, in the development of our children, and in the continued celebration of our diverse heritage

I respectfully urge the committee to approve funding for performing arts grants in Hawai‘i. Together, we can ensure that the arts remain a living, breathing part of our island life for generations to come

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:44:47 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Aloha, my name is Keala Fung and I am a dance artist, movement practitioner, and storyteller here in Honolulu HI. I am writing to urge you to fully SUPPORT HB1378 which appropriates funds for performing arts grants in the state. I belong to multiple dance companies including Tau Dance Theater and Danceds Unlimited, which have both been recipients of Hawaii based grants.

In tumultuous political times, both locally and globally, the role that the arts plays in healing, as well as mental physical and emotional health is so important. Thus, it is even more crucial now than ever that the arts is properly funded so that us artists can create work that supports and uplifts the masses.

The performing arts is a way to share stories and messages, connect with the community, educate, learn, and inspire. These are such important qualities and passing this bill will ensure the perpetuation of this important creative avenue which ultimately serves to feed the soul of humanity.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keala Fung, Honolulu

HB-1378

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:55:46 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shereen Balles	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Mai Kākou Chair and Committee,

Thank you for considering this Bill.

I am so grateful to see that my testimony from last year on the 1st reading for this bill on the Senate side, played a big role in moving forward to House Bill 1378.

I am in strong support of Bill 1378.

I believe that it is important to support our creative talents of culture and the arts here in Hawai'i, and I believe these talented fellows and programs deserve to be able to access these funds from these grants in order to continue telling our stories and help pave the way for our future generations to come.

Mahālo piha,

Shereen Balles