

TESTIMONY OF
LORI V. THOMAS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM,
CULTURE, AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
ON
February 7, 2009

H. B. 601

Chair Manahan and members of the committee, I am Lori Thomas, chairperson of the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts Commission and I am testifying today as an individual. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on H. B. 601, which I oppose.

The proposed legislation allows up to 50% of funds in the Works of Art Special Fund to be used for capital improvement projects, the purchase of facilities and the repair and maintenance of facilities dedicated to culture and arts. It also removes capital improvement appropriations that are designated for renovation of state buildings from the Works of Art Special Fund's 1% transfer requirement.

I concur with the need for funds for repair and maintenance of state buildings, as well as the need for maintaining culture and arts facilities. However, since the Works of Art Special Fund was established in FY 1989, the SFCA has received a modest average of \$2.8 million each year in 1% revenues. If the 1% revenues to the fund are so severely cut, the Art in Public Places Program and the Hawaii State Art Museum would cease to exist, as would the long history of public art in Hawaii, the Art in Public Places Program's presence as a vanguard for public and

contemporary local art; the economic vitality it brings to the state; its many fine educational and cultural programs; its fine art collection, and most of all, its presence as government's investment in the creativity and vision of its people.

The Works of Art Special Fund has always been carefully managed and the Art in Public Places Program has developed dramatically as a result of competent leadership and public interest in and support of the State Art Collection. The SFCA itself may not be able to survive without its full 1% appropriation, as more than half of its staff, including all of its administration if funded at least in part, with Special funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.