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TESTIMONY OF
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEES ON TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AND HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
February 17, 2015

S.B. 825

RELATING TO CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN HAWAII AND PUERTO RICO

Chair Kahele, Chair Taniguchi, and members of the committees, I am
Jonathan Johnson, executive director of the State Foundation on Culture and
the Arts (SFCA), and I am pleased to testify in support of S.B. 825.

The SFCA's partnership with artists and cultural resources of Puerto
Rican heritage is ongoing. When Hawaii hosted a festival at the Smithsonian
Institution in 1988, the artistry, music, dance and food of Puerto Rico traveled
with us to Washington D.C. When the festival was restaged in Hawaii two years
later, it was with the participation of this contingent of Puerto Rican artists. In
addition, when the State supported the centennial celebration of the Puerto
Rican migration to Hawaii in 2000, the SFCA facilitated its grant in aid from the
State Legislature and was present at community events throughout the year.

S.B. 825 calls for prolonging this colorful and joyful cultural interchange.
The SFCA recommends that implementation of the measure start with
appointing the commission and that the commission be tasked with looking into
the feasibility of a cultural exchange program between Hawaii and Puerto Rico.
Further, that the commission provide to the Legislature its recommendations for
the cultural exchange and related activities during each year of FY 2016-2017,
and that there be a sunset date for the commission included in the measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

