



TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 2117, H.D. 2, RELATING TO THE ARTS.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

**DATE:** Monday, March 16, 2026 **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 224

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Ian Robertson, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force to develop a dataset that supports equitable access to arts education and submit reports to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Sessions of 2027 and 2029.

Because the task force is not established within a principal department, and article V, section 6, of the Hawaii Constitution provides in part that "***[t]emporary*** commissions or agencies for special purposes may be established by law and need not be allocated within a principal department" (emphasis added), we respectfully suggest clarifying the temporary nature of the task force. Specifically, we recommend inserting the phrase "**and shall thereafter be dissolved**" after the word "2029" on page 5, line 14.

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



**HAWAII**  
STATE FOUNDATION on  
CULTURE and the ARTS

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

Governor  
Josh Green, M.D.

Comptroller  
Keith A. Regan

Chairperson  
Konrad Ng

Commissioners  
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Sean Connelly  
Randall Francisco  
Randall Fujiki  
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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director  
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts**

**Before the  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026 Conference Room 224 at 1:00 PM**

**HOUSE BILL 2117\_HD2  
RELATING TO THE ARTS**

Dear Chair Lee and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA), is dedicated to the promotion, perpetuation, and preservation of culture and the arts in Hawai'i.

SFCA **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2117\_HD2 which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force to create a comprehensive, publicly accessible statewide database and geographic information system map of arts entities and programs.

Arts data mapping is essential because it makes the creative work of Hawaii's communities visible, measurable, and protectable. Artists, cultural organizations, and creative spaces are often underrepresented from traditional data sources. When they are not counted, they are easily overlooked in funding decisions, policy development, and long-term planning.

Mapping arts data helps us understand where cultural activity actually happens, who is being served, and who is being left out. It reveals inequities in access to resources and allows public and private funders to invest more fairly and effectively.

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts requests that there is ample time for the Taskforce to convene and develop a plan to establish a solid foundation and criteria for the data mapping project. The SFCA will also have the capacity to house and manage the data once the development of the project is set.

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



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/16/2026

**Time:** 01:00 PM

**Location:** CR 224 & Videoconference

**Committee:** WLA

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB2117, HD2, RELATING TO THE ARTS.

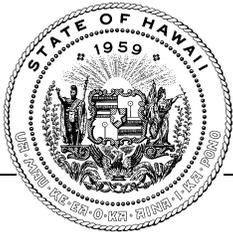
**Purpose of Bill:** Establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force to conduct a study and develop a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems map of arts entities and programs engaged in arts and arts education. Requires interim and final reports to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education supports HB 2117 HD 2 but would defer to the Hawaii Youth Symphony in regards to the implementation of the task force.

The Fine Arts program, including music and dance, is foundational to the development of the whole child. By integrating the Fine Arts into our students' learning, we empower them to express their creativity and explore their imagination. Student learning that embraces the Fine Arts enables students to bridge the connections between logic and wonder, connecting to themselves and their environment. Mapping the Fine Arts programs offered by schools, municipal services, nonprofits, and private businesses may be a means to bridge the gap between our existing arts resources and the communities, thus increasing opportunities for students to explore the arts further.

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



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**  
Monday, March 16, 2026, 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of  
**HB 2117, HD2**  
**RELATING TO THE ARTS.**

**LATE**

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) supports HB 2117, HD2, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force to conduct a study and develop a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems (GIS) map of arts entities and programs engaged in arts and arts education.

A statewide database will help artists and practitioners, students, parents, educators, and policy makers better understand the ecosystem of arts organizations and arts education opportunities in Hawai'i – where they are located, the programs and supports they offer, the communities they serve, and the gaps that exist. Furthermore, combining this data with other data in a GIS can provide additional context, revealing opportunities for investment and collaboration, and supporting informed decision making.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**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

**GEORJA SKINNER**

**Administrator, Creative Industries Division**

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

before the

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Monday, March 16, 2026

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of

**HB2117 HD2**

**RELATING TO THE ARTS**

**LATE**

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HB2117 HD2, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force, including independent and public charter schools as well as neighbor island arts education programs to conduct a comprehensive statewide survey, develop a publicly accessible database and geographic information system (GIS) map of arts entities and programs and provide an interim report focused on music and dance to the Legislature prior to the 2027 session, and a final report on the arts in general and arts education programming prior to the 2029 session.

CID agrees with the expansion of the membership of the MADE task force and the phased reporting approach in HD2, and recognizes that the creation of a centralized, statewide database addressing arts education and the creative economy can provide essential tools for identifying gaps in education, access, coordinating services, and aiding in decision-making regarding policy, funding, and program

development.

By leveraging advances in GIS and open data platforms, the MADE Task Force will create transparent, accessible resources that benefit communities statewide. This initiative aligns with DBEDT's commitment to fostering workforce development and promoting economic growth through Hawai'i's vibrant creative sector.

While certain counties have developed geographic information system tools, these are limited in scope and do not comprehensively capture statewide data. This measure will enable nonprofit administrators, business leaders, philanthropists, lawmakers, educators, and grant makers to better understand the geographic distribution and availability of arts programs across all counties, ultimately supporting equitable access to arts education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
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Statement of

**GEORJA SKINNER**

**Administrator, Creative Industries Division**

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

before the

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Monday, March 16, 2026

1:00 PM

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

In consideration of

**HB2117 HD2**

**RELATING TO THE ARTS**

**LATE**

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HB2117 HD2, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force, including independent and public charter schools as well as neighbor island arts education programs to conduct a comprehensive statewide survey, develop a publicly accessible database and geographic information system (GIS) map of arts entities and programs and provide an interim report focused on music and dance to the Legislature prior to the 2027 session, and a final report on the arts in general and arts education programming prior to the 2029 session. .

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By leveraging advances in GIS and open data platforms, the MADE Task Force will create transparent, accessible resources that benefit communities statewide. This initiative aligns with DBEDT's commitment to fostering workforce development and promoting economic growth through Hawai'i's vibrant creative sector.

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

**Hawai'i Arts Alliance  
Testimony in Strong Support of HB2117 (HD2)  
Relating to Arts Data Mapping**

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

The Hawai'i Arts Alliance continues to support HB2117 and appreciates the Legislature's ongoing consideration of this important measure.

As Hawai'i continues to invest in strengthening arts education and the creative economy, the need for reliable, statewide data becomes increasingly urgent. HB2117 provides a practical framework for gathering and organizing information that can help policymakers, educators, and community organizations better understand where arts opportunities currently exist and where additional support may be needed.

Across our islands, arts programs are delivered through a wide network of schools, nonprofit organizations, cultural practitioners, municipal programs, and private sector partners. However, this information currently exists in fragmented systems or informal networks. By establishing the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force and developing a publicly accessible geographic information system map, this bill will help Hawai'i build a clearer picture of its arts ecosystem and make that information available to communities statewide.

A comprehensive statewide dataset will also help decision-makers better align policy, funding, and program development. When educators, nonprofit leaders, and funders can see where programs are concentrated—and where communities remain underserved—it becomes much easier to coordinate resources, strengthen partnerships, and expand access to arts education.

We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to building stronger tools for understanding Hawai'i's arts landscape and look forward to participating in the collaborative work envisioned by this task force.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

**Gaye Humphrey  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Arts Alliance**

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HAWAI'I  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

DANE LAM | MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i  
Regular Session of 2026  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts  
Testimony by Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra  
March 16, 2026

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2117 HD2 – RELATING TO  
THE ARTS – MAPPING OF ARTS DATA FOR EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

**Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,**

I write in strong support of HB2117 HD2, which will deliver the comprehensive arts education data Hawai'i urgently needs, empowering organizations like the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and others to better understand where support is most needed and to more effectively serve the children of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your serious consideration of this measure.

Sincerely,

Amy Iwano  
President & CEO  
Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra



March 13, 2026

Senate Committee on Water, Land Culture and the Arts

Bill Number: HB 2117, HD2 Relating to the Arts  
Hearing Date and Time: March 16<sup>th</sup> 2026 at 1:00 PM (Room 224)  
Re: Testimony of Hawai'i Data Collaborative in support

Aloha e Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee:

We are writing **in strong support on** HB 2117, HD2 Relating to the Arts.

This bill will establish the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force to conduct a study and develop a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems map of arts entities and program engaged in arts and arts education.

The work that will be conducted by the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force will codify a statewide arts data inventory that is transparent and public, strengthening the capacity of educators, non-profit practitioners, cultural institutions, and philanthropists to use data to identify service gaps, guide resource allocation, and create more equitable access to arts education across Hawai'i's diverse communities. A centralized arts education dataset with a geographic component will allow users to see where programs exist, where resources are lacking, and how arts opportunities intersect with broader education, workforce, and community well-being indicators.

Hawai'i Data Collaborative (HDC) firmly believes that data informs our understanding of what's happening, why it's happening, and what we can do about it. Data helps identify opportunities, guide decisions, and create systems of accountability so we, as a community, can achieve better outcomes for all. Because HDC's focus is to improve the household need space, we partner with government, philanthropy, and community based organizations (CBO) to improve the data ecosystem in Hawai'i.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2117.

Thomas Lee, PhD, MPH  
Director of Government Partnerships  
Hawai'i Data Collaborative

**TO:** SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Committee

**FROM:** Elise Inouye, Director of Policy and Public Affairs

**RE:** Testimony in Support for HB 2117 HD 2, Relating to the Arts

**DATE:** Monday, March 16, 2026 at 1:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Conference Room 224

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The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **supports HB 2117 HD 2**, relating to the creation of the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force.

HCF has a long history of partnering with the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) to increase access to arts education at public and charter schools through the Artists in the Schools program. While this program provides insight into the great demand for arts education, there is also a need to gather data to identify gaps and better coordinate services and resources throughout the state.

HCF believes that when opportunities to practice and participate in arts and culture are inclusive and accessible to everyone, from keiki to kūpuna, we will have a healthier community in Hawai'i. That is why we are committed to increasing access to arts and culture as a priority area within HCF's CHANGE Framework.

This task force will help develop a much-needed comprehensive database of arts data, to facilitate equitable access to arts education statewide and inform prioritization of access for participants that face the greatest barriers to accessing arts education.

Supporting the arts and culture community contributes significantly to the holistic well-being of Hawai'i's residents. **We respectfully urge you to advance HB 2117 HD 2** to continue to affirm the importance of arts and culture in Hawai'i.



**Letter of Support for HB2117 HD2**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of 'Ohina Labs, I am writing in strong support of HB2117 HD2, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force to study and develop a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems (GIS) map of arts entities and arts education programs across Hawai'i.

'Ohina Labs is a Hawai'i-based nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the local creative economy by supporting filmmakers, storytellers, and media artists through professional development, mentorship, and education. Our work spans multiple islands and communities, particularly those that have historically been underrepresented in the arts sector. Through this work, we have consistently seen how difficult it can be for educators, students, artists, and policymakers to identify existing arts resources, programs, and gaps in access.

HB2117 HD2 addresses a critical need. A centralized, publicly accessible mapping of arts and arts education entities will provide invaluable data to inform policy decisions, improve coordination across agencies and organizations, and ensure more equitable distribution of resources statewide. For arts organizations, this mapping tool will strengthen nonprofits' ability to secure grants, illustrate community needs, and collaborate across sectors to expand access to the arts in Hawai'i.

We commend the Legislature for recognizing the importance of data-driven planning in the arts and for advancing a thoughtful, inclusive approach through HB2117 HD2. 'Ohina Labs respectfully urges your support for this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Gerard Elmore

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerard Elmore".

Executive Director

'Ohina Labs





1350 S. King Street, Suite 201 • Honolulu, HI • 96814

**14 March 2026**

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, & the Arts (WLA)

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Senator Rachele Lamosao, Senator Samantha DeCorte, Members

***Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of  
HB 2117 HD 2 – Relating to the Arts***

**Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,**

Thank you for hearing HB2117 HD2, and for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Opportunities to participate in the arts have profound lifelong benefits. In addition to developing creative capacity and contributing to the collective cultural life of our communities, arts learning supports character development, cognitive growth, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and emotional well-being. For many keiki, music and the arts also provide a meaningful connection to school, ‘ohana, kupuna, and community.

For the past fourteen years, I have served as chief executive of Hawai‘i Youth Symphony (HYS), working to expand equitable access to music education for youth statewide. During this time, our organization (and many of our colleagues across the arts) have sought to better understand the opportunity gap in Hawai‘i: who has access to arts education, where that access exists, and where it does not.

Through conversations with leaders in music, dance, theatre, and visual arts, it has become increasingly clear that Hawai‘i does not currently maintain a comprehensive dataset (or map) of arts education opportunities available to our youth. In contrast, many states on the continent regularly collect and publish this information.

HB 2117 addresses this gap by proposing a survey of public, charter, private, and community-based arts education programs and the creation of a publicly accessible statewide database and geographic information system (GIS) map; particularly one in which the arts can be visualized with other map layers. Such a resource would allow educators, policymakers, and nonprofit leaders to better understand where opportunities exist and where additional investment may be needed.

To my knowledge, this type of statewide mapping effort has never been undertaken in Hawai‘i. Completing it would bring our state into alignment with dozens of others that actively track and analyze their arts education ecosystems. The League of American Orchestras, the only national organization dedicated to orchestras and their communities, has expressed support for efforts that expand access to comprehensive data about the arts and arts education landscape.



1350 S. King Street, Suite 201 • Honolulu, HI • 96814

In researching how other states approach this work, I have learned that some states rely on private vendors to develop dashboards or standalone mapping systems. However, I believe that Hawai'i is uniquely positioned to approach this effort locally. Through the Statewide GIS Data Program (OPSD) and Hawai'i Policy Map from the Hawai'i Data Collaborative, our state already has strong, publicly accessible infrastructure that could support this project.

Interest in HB 2117 has also activated an impressive network of organizations and leaders who recognize the importance of the arts in the lives of Hawai'i's young people. The proposed task force brings together key partners across the state, including the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, the Hawai'i Arts Alliance, the Hawai'i State Department of Education, the Hawai'i Community Foundation, the State Public Charter School Commission, and the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools, alongside practicing artists and arts educators, and our lawmakers. The breadth of this coalition reflects a shared recognition that developing a comprehensive dataset and GIS map of arts education opportunities is both timely and essential for strengthening access statewide.

It is often said that we can never have "enough" arts opportunities for youth. But what are the actual metrics of equitable access in our state? Of the approximately 200,000 K–12 students in Hawai'i, which communities currently have access to arts education, and which do not? Just as importantly, what barriers prevent some students from participating?

A statewide dataset would allow nonprofit leaders like myself to identify opportunity gaps and measure progress more clearly toward expanding access. Reliable data is also essential when communicating impact to grantmakers, philanthropists, and other stakeholders. Without access to statewide data, organizations working to serve our youth are operating at a disadvantage.

Because this work would begin from a baseline of limited existing data, I respectfully ask the committee to consider extending the implementation timeline. An interim report on music and dance by 2028 (rather than 2027—Page 5, line 9), followed by a final report including theatre and visual arts by 2030 (rather than 2029—Page 5, line 14), would allow sufficient time to build a strong and reliable dataset.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support of this important measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Wong".

Randy Wong  
President & CEO, Hawai'i Youth Symphony

# BALLET HAWAII

## BALLET HAWAII'S TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2117

Relating to Arts Education Data Mapping

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Richard Vida**, and I serve as the **Executive Director of Ballet Hawaii**, one of the state's leading nonprofit arts education and performance organizations. On behalf of Ballet Hawaii and the hundreds of students, families, and community members we serve each year, I write in strong support of HB2117, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force.

As a nonprofit leader working directly in arts education across Hawai'i, one of the most persistent challenges we face is the lack of comprehensive statewide data on access to arts education. While we know that the arts are transformative for young people and communities, it is currently very difficult to measure the true scope of opportunity—or the gaps in opportunity—across our islands.

Schools, nonprofit organizations, municipal programs, and private arts providers all collect their own information, but there is no unified system that allows policymakers, educators, or community leaders to see the full picture. It becomes difficult to identify where arts programs are thriving, where they are lacking, and where strategic investment could make the greatest impact. HB2117 provides a thoughtful solution by establishing a task force to collect, organize, and map arts education data statewide using Hawai'i's publicly accessible Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platform.

Equally important, placing stewardship of this effort with the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts ensures that the data will be maintained, updated, and made accessible to the public, creating a lasting resource for Hawai'i.

The arts benefit our communities exponentially—supporting creativity, cultural understanding, academic achievement, and economic vitality. For young people in particular, participation in the arts has been shown to strengthen confidence, collaboration, discipline, and critical thinking—skills that extend far beyond the studio or classroom. However, if we are to ensure that all students across Hawai'i have equitable access to these opportunities, we must first understand where those opportunities exist and where they do not. HB2117 is a critical step toward building that understanding.

Ballet Hawaii respectfully urges the State Legislature and Committee to pass HB2117 and support the creation of a transparent, data-driven foundation for arts education access statewide.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Richard Vida  
Executive Director  
Ballet Hawaii

650 Iwilei Road, Box 221  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-5319  
[www.ballethawaii.org](http://www.ballethawaii.org)  
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**Senator Chris Lee, Chair**

**Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair**

Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Monday, March 16, 2026

1:00PM - Room 224

HB2117 HD2 - Relating to the Arts: Mapping of Arts Data for Education - Support

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

HULI PAC supports HB2117 HD2, which establishes a statewide arts database to better understand and strengthen Hawai'i's arts education ecosystem.

HULI PAC is a grassroots, Hawai'i Island-based political action committee that empowers our local community to endorse and support candidates and officeholders of integrity who serve the 'āina and people of Hawai'i Island. We advocate for equitable, community-centered public policy.

A comprehensive arts database will improve visibility, coordination, and collaboration across Hawai'i's arts and education sectors. By mapping programs and resources statewide, policymakers, educators, and community partners can better identify where programs exist, where gaps remain, and how resources can be deployed more effectively.

At a time of rising global conflict and polarization, the arts help young people process emotion, build empathy, and sustain a sense of shared humanity. In Hawai'i, music, storytelling, and creative traditions are woven into the fabric of community life, serving as powerful tools for connection, healing, and cultural expression.

Publicly accessible data also strengthens accountability and partnership. When arts data is layered with indicators such as income, housing stability, and educational attainment, it helps guide both public and philanthropic investment toward the communities and students who need it most.

By improving access to reliable information and strengthening coordination, HB2117 HD2 helps position the arts as an essential part of Hawai'i's strategy for supporting our keiki, strengthening our communities, and nurturing the next generation.

For these reasons, HULI PAC strongly supports this measure.

Mahalo.

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 5:12:22 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

I am writing in strong support of HB2117 HD2, which establishes the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force to develop a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems (GIS) map of arts entities and programs engaged in arts and arts education across Hawai‘i. This bill is a forward-thinking investment in our state's arts infrastructure — one that will help policymakers, educators, and communities better understand where arts resources exist, where gaps remain, and how to direct support most effectively.

**THE NEED FOR BETTER ARTS DATA IN HAWAI‘I**

Despite the richness of Hawai‘i's arts and cultural landscape, there is currently no comprehensive, publicly accessible statewide map or database of arts entities and arts education programs. This gap makes it difficult for families, schools, policymakers, and funders to know what resources are available — and where they are not. Hawai‘i's geographic reality as a multi-island state makes this challenge even more acute, as communities on neighbor islands and in rural areas may have significantly different access to arts programming than those in urban Honolulu.

The need is real: Hawaii's Department of Education reports that 50.5% of public school students statewide are considered economically disadvantaged, and despite a 2001 mandate requiring the State to guarantee K-12 students' access to high-quality arts education, policy limitations and shrinking budgets continue to negatively impact the ability of teachers to integrate the arts into their core curriculum. Without reliable data on where arts programs exist and where they are absent, we cannot effectively address these inequities.

**ARTS EDUCATION MATTERS FOR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES**

Multiple studies indicate that participation in arts and arts education is associated with improved school readiness among young children at risk, with benefits including positive academic and behavioral outcomes in youth, and a host of beneficial health, cognitive, and social outcomes for adults. Hawai‘i's arts education organizations already serve tens of thousands of students across the state — but their reach is limited by the lack of a coordinated, data-driven approach to identifying and filling gaps in coverage.

A statewide GIS map would allow stakeholders to visualize where arts resources are concentrated and where communities are underserved, enabling more strategic allocation of funding, grants, and programming. This aligns directly with the work of the SFCA and partner organizations, which already provide funding to support nonprofit organizations, individuals, and schools that offer training and services in the arts, culture, and humanities across the state.

## GIS IS A PROVEN TOOL FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Geographic information systems are already used effectively by state agencies in Hawai‘i to improve government decision-making and support education, outreach, and community involvement. Applying this same technology to the arts sector is a natural and practical extension — one that will give legislators, schools, community organizations, and funders a clear, evidence-based picture of the statewide arts landscape.

A publicly available database and GIS map of arts entities and programs would:

1. Identify underserved communities and geographic gaps in arts access across all islands.
2. Empower families and schools to find arts programs and opportunities near them.
3. Help funders and grant-makers direct resources to where they are most needed.
4. Provide the Legislature with reliable data to inform future arts policy and appropriations.
5. Strengthen coordination among the many organizations that make up Hawai‘i's arts ecosystem.

## CONCLUSION

HB2117 HD2 is a smart, data-driven approach to strengthening arts education and access across our state. By establishing the Mapping of Arts Data for Education Task Force and requiring interim and final reports to the Legislature, this bill ensures accountability and delivers actionable information that can guide policy for years to come. I strongly urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Ezgi Green,

Waiialua, Hawaii

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 8:33:11 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emi Horii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2117, which would establish the Mapping of Arts Data for Education (MADE) Task Force to create a comprehensive, publicly accessible statewide database and geographic information system map of arts entities and programs.

The creation of a statewide arts database will support more informed decision-making among nonprofits, schools, and philanthropic partners. I believe it will likewise be a meaningful resource for legislators and the general public.

By mapping arts opportunities through GIS, we can layer different data maps, including district boundaries. This will give legislators a clear idea of what programs and resources exist within their districts, where gaps remain, and which communities may be underserved. Ultimately, this tool will help lawmakers better understand and serve their communities.

Making this information available on a public website will also create a practical resource for the general public. Young people interested in exploring the arts, as well as adults seeking creative opportunities nearby, will be able to easily discover programs that might otherwise be harder to find. Too often, awareness of arts opportunities depends on individual organizations' outreach efforts. A centralized, statewide database will help ensure that more people can take advantage of the many arts programs Hawaii has to offer.

I also respectfully suggest **extending the implementation timeline** in the bill. As currently drafted, the task force would have about five months (July 2026 - November 2026) to gather and submit music and dance data, which may not be enough time to collect complete and accurate information. **Deferring the deadlines by one year, such as to 2028 and 2030 (on page 5, lines 9 and 14, respectively)**, would allow for a stronger final product.

On a personal note, I am a proud Hawaii Youth Symphony (HYS) alumna, and the arts programming in Hawaii has had a significant impact on my life. Through opportunities like HYS, I developed a lifelong passion for violin, found a community of fellow musicians, and learned the value of discipline, teamwork, and attention to detail. The arts offer meaningful benefits to students, and improved data can strengthen access to the arts across the state.

I respectfully urge your support for this measure.

Sincerely,

Emi Horii

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 10:01:03 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this legislation and its asset mapping for the public arts statewide.

With aloha,

David Ball

Waiālae-Kahala

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 10:32:03 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Maurer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*As a supporter of music education in our schools and communities, I strongly SUPPORT HB 2117. Many excellent school and community music programs already exist, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development. Publicly-accessible data also give philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai'i's next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.*

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 11:19:08 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Browne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Thank you for moving this bill forward.**

**Developing a comprehensive, publicly available statewide database and geographic information systems map of arts entities and programs engaged in arts and arts education is a huge step towards equity and quality in our arts education programs. Without this data, schools in higher economic districts have an advantage since parents are able to provide students with arts opportunities. The Department of Education, the Hawaii State Public Charter Schools Commission, and the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools are all in favor of this bill.**

**Thank you for hearing this bill and passing it into law.**

**Susan Browne**

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 11:45:25 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Miki Ito Saysamon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Miki Ito-Saysamon and I am a parent of a student in Hawai'i Youth Symphony. I live in Honolulu.

I support HB2117. Music education programs like Hawai'i Youth Symphony provide meaningful opportunities for students to grow not only as musicians but also as individuals. Through music, students learn discipline, teamwork, and confidence.

Supporting music and arts education helps strengthen our community and gives young people in Hawai'i opportunities to develop their talents.

Mahalo for supporting music education in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,  
Miki Ito-Saysamon  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

My name is Claire Ito-Saysamon and I am a student musician in Hawai'i Youth Symphony.

I respectfully support HB2117. Being part of Hawai'i Youth Symphony has given me the opportunity to grow not only as a musician but also as a person. Through orchestra, I have learned dedication, teamwork, and the joy of making music with others.

Music education provides students like me with a meaningful and positive path. Programs like Hawai'i Youth Symphony help young people stay inspired, work hard, and connect with our community through music.

Mahalo for supporting music education and opportunities for students in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,  
Claire Ito-Saysamon

Student Musician  
Hawai'i Youth Symphony

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:09:06 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lori Watkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent, I **SUPPORT** HB 2117 because finding consistent, high-quality music opportunities for our children can be difficult without clear information. A statewide arts and music education database would help ‘ohana identify programs in their communities and better plan their children’s participation. By mapping arts access alongside data like income and educational attainment, the state recognizes music as part of overall community well-being. This transparency also helps funders invest strategically, ensuring sustainable support for youth programs across Hawai‘i. Additionally, as a military family unfamiliar with local schools when we arrive on island, we rely on any available, easily accessible information to guide us toward the schools that will most benefit our children's interests and abilities.

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:12:04 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wailani Kontic	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*As a supporter of music education in our schools and communities, an employee of Hawaii Youth Symphony, I strongly SUPPORT HB 2117. Many excellent school and community music programs already exist across Hawaii, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development and can tell us where more resources in this area are needed. Publicly-accessible data would also give our philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai'i's next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.*

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:43:24 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ning Zhu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent of a student participating in the Hawai'i Youth Symphony, I strongly support HB2117. Through my child's experience in the orchestra, I have seen how music education helps students develop discipline, confidence, teamwork, and a deeper connection to our community.

However, it is not always easy for families to find information about available music and arts programs. A statewide database that maps arts and music education opportunities would help families better understand what programs exist and how to access them. It would also help identify communities that need more support.

Music education plays an important role in the growth of our children and in the cultural life of Hawai'i. I believe this bill will help strengthen arts education across the state and allow more students to benefit from these opportunities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:05:53 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kirk Shitaoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*I am Kirk Shitaoka, a parent of the Hawai'i Youth Symphony and resident of Honolulu. I strongly support, and respectfully urge passage of HB 2117, HD2. I believe that any form of Art plays an important role in a student's education, and in particular playing music has been proven to enhance the development of a youth's cognitive skills, language ability, and physical dexterity. Your support of this measure will help to serve more students equitably across our islands. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 2117, HD2.*

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:49:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*As a supporter of music education in our schools and communities, I strongly SUPPORT HB 2117. Many excellent school and community music programs already exist, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development. Publicly-accessible data also give philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai'i's next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.*

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:10:06 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leo Nahe Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill! We need to support our local artists by whatever means necessary!

Aloha Legislators.

My name is Tom Geballe. I am 81 years old and have been a resident of Hilo for 45 years, for the last 35 of which I have been president of the Hawaii Concert Society. HCS is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the finest in classical music and dance to East Hawaii. Our seasons consist of 7-8 live chamber music concerts and dance performances involving nationally and internationally renowned musicians and dancers, and is open to all. Our website is [hawaiiconcertsociety.org](http://hawaiiconcertsociety.org). Our organization was founded in about 1960 and is currently in its 64<sup>th</sup> season. We subsist on contributions from our highly supportive members, modest grants, and ticket sales.

The one important classical musical experience that our community lacks, and indeed all of the neighbor island communities also lack, is the ability to attend concerts by professional symphony orchestras. It is far beyond our organization's financial capability to be able to present such concerts. Live orchestral music is one of the greatest achievements of humankind and is something that our and other neighbor island communities should have the opportunity to see and hear. It can be life-changing and highly beneficial to experience such art performed by some of the world's greatest musicians. I literally dream about being able to share concerts of great orchestral music, which I have attended many times in other parts of the USA and the world, and have also performed as an orchestra member as a youth and a young adult, with people in my home community of East Hawaii.

I am thus enthusiastically in favor of the HB2117, currently being considered by the Hawaii State Legislature, to name the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra our state orchestra and to provide finding for it to visit the neighbor islands. I trust that after decades of not having access to live performances by a professional symphony orchestra this bill will pass and that neighbor island adults and keiki will once again have the opportunity that so many others in our state and nation have.

Thank you,

Tom Geballe

President, Hawaii Concert Society

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:24:14 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angelique Axelrode	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support the arts ! Art infrastructure and community necessary for local artists to support themselves and get deserved recognition. THis map will be so beneficial in understanding our needs- data is evidence and stories

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 8:22:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edna Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- *As a supporter of the Hawai‘i Youth Symphony, I also strongly support H.B. 1860 HD1, which designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and provides ongoing funding for its artistic and educational activities. The HSO is a vital artistic institution that enriches our communities through free and accessible performances, educational partnerships, and outreach to schools and families. This designation will help stabilize its operations, increase public access to orchestral music, and reinforce the value of the arts in the cultural and educational life of our state.*

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 8:51:59 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Mau-Schank	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*As a supporter of music education in our schools and communities, as well as an alumna and board member of Hawai'i Youth Symphony, I strongly SUPPORT HB 2117. Many excellent school and community music programs already exist, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development. Publicly-accessible data also give philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai'i's next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.*

**LATE**

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 2:56:53 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alyssa Kawamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a supporter of music education in our schools and communities, I strongly SUPPORT HB 2117. Many excellent school and community music programs already exist, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development. Publicly-accessible data also give philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai‘i’s next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.

**LATE**

**HB-2117-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:24:02 PM  
Testimony for WLA on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carol Hirai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting the HYS teaches music and other life skills.

TESTIMONY OF TERRINA WONG  
IN SUPPORT OF HB 2117

**LATE**

Senator Lee, Chair  
Senator Inouye, Vice Chair

I have been a proud resident of Maunawili Valley in Kailua, the summer home of our Queen Liliuokalani where she composed “Aloha Oe.”

Music and all the arts are part of our State’s history and identity and are an integral part of the well-being of our community.

I am a very proud parent of a professional musician and music educator. I am a board member of the Hawaii Symphony Foundation and Chamber Music Hawaii. I actively participate as an adult student at Queen Emma Ballet and Diamond Head Theatre. All these organizations bring the arts to our keiki and enrich their lives and giving them multiple avenues of self-expression and learning.

I urge you to support the arts educators with trusted and precise information. I know, for example that finding consistent, high-quality music opportunities for our children can be difficult without clear information. A statewide arts and music education database would help ‘ohana identify programs in their communities and better plan their children’s participation. By mapping arts access alongside data like income and educational attainment, the state recognizes music as part of overall community well-being. This transparency also helps funders invest strategically, ensuring sustainable support for youth programs across Hawai‘i.

As an active contributor to the field of the arts music, dance, visual arts and theater, I deeply believe in arts education in our schools and community. For example, in music, many excellent school and community music programs already exist, but a comprehensive arts database increases visibility, strengthens collaboration, and builds awareness for all. When arts data is layered with income, housing, and education indicators, it positions music as essential infrastructure for youth development.

Publicly-accessible data also give philanthropic partners confidence to make sustained investments in Hawai‘i’s next generation, and more ways for us to champion the benefits of music and arts education for young people.

I urge you to support HB 2117.

Mahalo.

Terrina Wong