



HAWAII
STATE FOUNDATION on
CULTURE and the ARTS

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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 6, 2026 Conference Room 309 at 9:30AM**

**HOUSE BILL 2461
RELATING TO THE STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Dear Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2461 which increases the ceiling of the works of art special fund. Appropriates funds for the maintenance, upkeep, and preservation of the State's public art and collections. Appropriates funds for a collections manager position within the state foundation on culture and the arts.

Public funding for works of art strengthens the creative economy by supporting jobs, innovation, and long-term growth. Through its administration of the Works of Art Special Fund, the SFCA can cultivate local talent within the cultural sector and generate economic activity beyond the initial investment. Strategic expenditures of this kind promote sustainability within a diverse industry that influences all walks of life.

Currently the SFCA administers \$1.3 million dollars from the Works of Art Special Fund as its ceiling. However, a proposed increase to this ceiling would be greatly appreciated as it will allow the SFCA greater access to the Fund's existing cash balance. An increase would support the continued purchasing of artwork from Hawaii-based contemporary artists and address growing demands for large-scale site-specific Commissioned Works of Art (such as sculptures and murals) which are also funded by the Works of Art Special Fund. There are currently 7 active commissions slated for state buildings and the SFCA is projecting in its budget to add more funds to meet demand while also factoring in rising material and labor costs due to inflation, tariffs, and other disruptions in the global supply chain.

The SFCA supports Section 3 of this measure, to appropriate general funds for the maintenance and upkeep of artwork from the public art collection purchased through the Works of Art Special Fund. There is a substantial list of artwork from the collection that needs to be conserved. Current conservation needs range from routine cleaning and maintenance to major structural repair for existing commissions. To preserve over 400 public sculptures, mosaic murals, and bronze sculptures throughout the State in perpetuity, the SFCA requires dedicated funding for this effort.

The SFCA supports Section 4 of this measure to establish a full-time Collections Manager position. Until 2018, the SFCA employed a Collections Manager who was responsible for acquiring, documenting, displaying, and maintaining the State's public art collection as well as its commissioned, purchased, and gifted artworks. Since the position's abolishment, the SFCA is challenged with the record-keeping necessary to prioritize artwork conservation efforts based on budget availability.

The Collections Manager provides specifications for the space, facilities, equipment, and logistical services needed for the preservation, exhibition, and transportation of the collection. The position also aids in conservation efforts by evaluating an artwork's physical condition through written reporting and recommends appropriate treatment options through contracted examination, cleaning, and/or repair services. The Collections Manager can also recommend for the disposal of artwork if it is deemed beyond repair or display (deaccessioning).

If established, the position would work full-time on the above tasks as well as an oversight of the Collections Management Policy, ensuring that the collection is maintained and documented appropriately.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this measure.