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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 2605  
RELATING TO THE ARTS**

Dear Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

SFCA **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2605 which establishes a position within the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts to support implementation and coordination of specialized arts programs and therapeutic arts interventions for underserved and neurodiverse populations. Appropriates funds for the position.

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts takes pride in being an inclusive agency through the prioritization of broad community support and engagement. With the establishment of this position, the SFCA will be able to expand on providing inclusive programming for the underserved and historically minoritized. The SFCA currently provides some programming for this population, in partnership with organizations like Honolulu Theatre for Youth. It has been determined through measurables like increased community interest and requests, and testimonials that the impact is extremely positive.

Arts experiences directly correlate with self confidence. In a world that was not built often with neurodivergent individuals in mind, the arts are a space where there is the ability for them to take control and hone artistic vision. The arts also provide a non-verbal way to communicate, which can reduce anxiety and improve emotional regulation. As society continues to see the crucial intersection between arts and health in combatting social isolation and depression, this position would be a bridge between health initiatives and the arts, to expand such programming.

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