



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
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Statement of  
**GEORJA SKINNER**  
**Administrator, Creative Industries Division**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND ARTS**

Friday, April 17, 2026  
11:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of  
**SCR 99 SD1**  
**CONVENING A WORKING GROUP TO ESTABLISH A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
RECOGNIZED BY THE STATE TO SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE ENGAGEMENT  
AND RELATED INITIATIVES.**

Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the Committee. The Creative Industries Division (CID) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports SCR 99 SD1, which convenes a working group to develop recommendations for establishing and structuring a nonprofit organization recognized by the State to support arts and culture engagement and related initiatives.

CID agrees with the goals set forth by this resolution to identify successful arts and culture residency nonprofit models from other jurisdictions, to identify governance and partnership models, develop and establish structures, governance and operational frameworks for nonprofit organizations to partner with local creators, counterparts, students and communities, and identify potential partnerships with educational institutions, cultural organizations and community groups for mutual benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director  
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts**

**Before the  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTRE AND THE ARTS  
FRIDAY, APRIL 17 2026  
Conference Room 309 at 11:00 AM  
SCR99, SD1**

Dear Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts provides comments on SCR99, SD1 convening a working group to establish a nonprofit organization recognized by the state to support arts and culture engagement and related initiatives.

SFCA appreciates the intent to strengthen support for arts and culture engagement across the state. Convening a working group may provide an opportunity to thoughtfully assess existing systems, identify gaps, and explore strategies to better coordinate public and private resources.

At the same time, SFCA encourages careful consideration of how a new nonprofit entity would align with and complement existing organizations and state efforts. Hawai'i already benefits from a network of nonprofit arts organizations and public agencies engaged in similar work. Without clear definition and coordination, there is potential for duplication of effort, inefficiencies, or confusion in roles and responsibilities.

SFCA respectfully recommends that the working group include representation from existing arts and culture organizations, as well as state agencies currently administering arts programs, to ensure that any recommendations build upon and strengthen the community.

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

**SCR-99-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/16/2026 12:26:30 PM

Testimony for CAA on 4/17/2026 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Kahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of this resolution.

Our islands sit at a crossroads of Pacific cultures, Indigenous heritage, and global artistic traditions. This resolution recognizes that unique position and takes a meaningful step toward building the infrastructure needed to support the artists, writers, scholars, and creators who give expression to who we are.

Arts and cultural residency programs have proven transformative in other states and communities. They bring world-class creators into direct contact with local students, educators, and community members — not just for performances or exhibitions, but for genuine exchange. The kind of programming described in this resolution creates lasting relationships between visiting creators and local communities, and elevates the work being done right here at home.

A quasi-government nonprofit model, as described in the resolution, offers the flexibility that arts programming genuinely requires — the ability to pursue private partnerships, respond quickly to opportunities, and build community relationships in ways that more rigid structures often cannot.

I urge the committee to pass this resolution and move this important work forward.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Kahn

**SCR-99-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/16/2026 1:47:41 PM

Testimony for CAA on 4/17/2026 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yuka Polovina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Jeanne Kapela and members of the Committee on Culture & Arts,

**I am writing in full support of SCR99.**

Hawai‘i has a huge opportunity to replicate some of the successful programs that connect local students and residents with amazing talent from around the world. We should support every opportunity like this to create new ways to engage and help level up our local artists, creators, and community.

Mahalo for considering this testimony.

Best,

Yuka Polovina