

**Written Testimony in Support of FY09 Appropriations for the
National Endowment for the Arts**
Submitted by the Honorable Mufi Hannemann
Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
“Role of the Arts in Creativity and Innovation”

April 1, 2008

Mr. Chair and distinguished subcommittee members, it is an honor to represent the United States Conference of Mayors and particularly, my home, the City and County of Honolulu before this House Appropriations Subcommittee on Arts Advocacy Day. Specifically, on behalf of America’s mayors and major cities across the nation, I urge Congress to support the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the FY 2009 Interior Appropriations bill and to restore a budget of \$176 million for the creation, preservation, and presentation of culture and the arts in America through the NEA’s core programs—*Access to Artistic Excellence*, *Challenge America: Reaching Every Community*, *Federal/State Partnerships*, and *Learning in the Arts*.

When I took the office as mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; I was honored to be the first local born Mayor in 40 years. It is not often that someone gets to be the mayor of a city he or she was born and raised. I am the 13th Mayor of the 13th largest city in the nation, my county and the three other counties that comprise Hawaii are a collection of islands more than 2,000 miles from any continental land mass. Living in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the gateway to Asia and the other Pacific Island nations, I can tell you first hand how the culture and arts of our diverse communities are an integral part of our daily lives - how it enriches our lives.

As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports of the United States Conference of Mayors, I represent a body of governing officials who recognize the importance the arts play in each and every city. The arts are everywhere, throughout every city and town in the United States. The arts and culture is imbedded into the architecture of our homes, in the language we use to communicate, the different types of food we eat to nourish our bodies, in the music we listen to, the clothing we wear, and the activities we participate in as a community. It allows us to be individuals while at the same time the arts and culture links us as communities, cities, states, and as a nation. This is why arts are part of the United States Conference of Mayor’s 10 Point Plan to build “Strong Cities, Strong Families ... for a Strong America.”

Hawaii’s Leadership in the Arts

On October 27th, 2007, the International Herald-Tribune named Honolulu one of “The Top Ten Most Livable Cities.” While we are ranked No. 9, after such cities as Munich, Copenhagen, Tokyo and Sidney, Honolulu is the only American city to make the list. This designation is a testament to the people of Honolulu and it also means we must continue to lead by example.

Historically, the Hawaiian Islands have been a leader in education, culture and the arts; and we will continue to do so. In 1850, led by the ruling monarchs of the islands, Hawaii had the highest literacy rate in the world. In 1881, King David Kalakaua, Hawaii’s last ruling king, was the first state dignitary to travel around the world. A gifted composer, King Kalakaua made it his

personal task to infuse culture and the arts at all levels of government in order to maintain the islands' integrity and to compete with the other countries he visited. The king created a renaissance of music, dance and the arts with the byproducts of building social capacity, economic benefits and cultural and ecotourism more than 150 years before these terms were ever defined.

In Honolulu we perpetuate the cultural inheritance of our indigenous Hawaiian culture and celebrate the unique charm and diversity of its people. This balance of host culture and ethnic diversity is attributed to our artists and cultural practitioners of our city. One of the initiatives of my administration is to address the stewardship of our islands in a program called the *21st Century Ahupua`a*. This sophisticated and successful resource management system honors our Polynesian heritage by renewing our commitment to self-sufficiency and the protection of our precious islands. While the focus of the *21st Century Ahupua`a* is on environmental issues, its concepts are based on traditional Hawaiian cultural values. Our cultural values define us as a city and as an island state. It also brings to the forefront the cultural assets we possess and allows us to use these assets to compete in the national and global market as we protect our natural resources, focus on cultural tourism and continue to build a stronger and vibrant community. This is an example of why arts and culture is as essential as the business plan used to maintain any substantial program. We cannot do without the other.

Today two of the biggest culture and the arts components in Hawaii are music and hula. Recently the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences of the United States has placed Hawaiian music in its own category at the annual Grammy Awards. This recognition allows our artists national and global recognition for their work. Hula has also been highly popularized throughout the world. Dancers from Tokyo to New York; Paris to Amsterdam are all learning this cultural dance form in their own cities. Our music and hula has helped to make us uniquely Hawaii and we have prioritized them as an integral part of our highly popular sun-sand-sea-and surf package brand identity. The goal is to be known as the Pacific Region's "cultural destination."

Arts Education

As we look towards culture to build and maintain social capacity, we can look at the arts in order to maintain economic stability and be competitive in a global economy. Yet, the arts are often pushed to the rear of our educational institutions throughout many cities and states in America. We need to change our preconceptions that arts are a "nice-to-have" and proclaim that the arts are a "need-to-have" in our communities.

We need to implore our government officials to place the arts on the same level of importance as reading, math and science. We must begin to look at the arts as one of the educational skills that will be carried within a child through their years in school and with them into the future. The creative skills learned will make a difference on how the future of America's employment force competes in the world of tomorrow. Our social and economic benefits are dependent on it.

The Japanese educational system, which on many levels ranks ahead of the United States, is utilizing the arts as a key skill for the future. A reason for this is attributed to the fact they set standard hours in the national elementary school curriculum emphasizing subjects such as music,

arts and handicrafts, in addition to math and science. We need to learn from their example, in order to compete at a global level.

Economic Impact of the Arts

Our neighbors in Canada are showing success through their government involvement in facilitating strategic investment in the arts through public-private partnerships. During the past five years, key support in the performing arts leverages equal private sector dollars and earns a positive return of 200% based on direct and indirect benefits alone. They are reaping many additional benefits in education, community engagement, national brand identity, regional development, and highly motivated employees.

Within my administration we have a Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts, a Honolulu Film Office and a Mayor's Office of Economic Development. All three offices report directly to me at a cabinet level. These three departments work hand in hand to promote and perpetuate Hawaii's unique arts and culture throughout the City and County of Honolulu and to support a creative industry. This past year our Office of Culture and the Arts awarded \$290,000 in grant funds to nonprofit arts organizations for various art and cultural projects. These funds provided a return gross investment of more than \$4 million in the community. The Office of Economic Development works with the Hawaii Tourism Authority in promoting cultural events in Honolulu through the Cultural Product Enrichment Program. This past year the City and County of Honolulu awarded \$500,000 in grants as seed money and matching funds for cultural programs. The Honolulu Film Office has worked diligently to assist in the expansion of the film industry. Monies spent for film production in Honolulu is expected to surpass the \$100 million dollar mark for 2007. This office has worked with our legislators to pass a measure called Act 88 which gives filmmakers a 15-20% production tax credit. The result is an energized industry with active workforce development program that offers on-the-job training. *Lost*, the global hit is viewed in more than 220 countries and territories is one of Honolulu's production success stories. The statewide impact for the industry from fiscal year 2007 is estimated to exceed \$277 million and generated more than \$36 million in tax revenue.

Having these department heads report directly at a cabinet level allows us first hand knowledge as to how our city government support affects our communities' cultural practices, arts economy, the tourist industry, and the quality of life that is dependent on the social and cultural well-being of the city.

In 1997, as a member of the City Council, I introduced a bill to establish an arts enterprise program. One of the outcomes of that bill is The ARTS at Marks Garage in downtown Honolulu, which led to a partnership with the Hawai'i Arts Alliance and the Ford Foundation. The project continues today by serving as a catalyst to the revitalization of the Chinatown area. The arts enterprise program created a place for the arts to thrive and attract other businesses to take advantage of the growing area; including the first free WiFi zone in the city. The revitalization has also led to Chinatown's recognition as a Preserve American Community designation by First Lady Laura Bush. Today in addition to The ARTS at Marks Garage, Chinatown has flourished, featuring close to forty galleries and arts venues in the area, restaurants that showcase the flavors of the world, and the return of a nightlife scene to a part of town that heretofore had been deserted after work. For example, this past year at least 50,000

people attended activities at The ARTS at Marks Garage. These activities incorporate more than 80 community partners, 1,000 artists, and directly impacts more than 130 neighborhood businesses. Activities such as this indicate the arts are vital to the stability of a city.

Mayors' 10-Point Plan

This year the United State Conference of Mayors celebrates its 75th anniversary as a nonpartisan organization of cities. We continue to work to strengthen federal-city relations and to ensure the federal policy meets all of our cities' needs. We developed an action agenda for tourism and arts as part of our **Mayors' 10-Point Plan: Strong Cities, Strong Family, For a Strong America.**

It states the arts, humanities, and museums are critical to the quality of life and livability of America's cities. It has been shown that the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity annually, supports over 5.7 million full time jobs, and returns over \$12 billion in federal income taxes annually. Governments which support the arts, on average, see a return on investment of over \$7 in taxes for every \$1 that the government appropriates. Furthermore, federal, state and local governments, private foundations, corporations and individuals, provide access to artistic activities for peoples of all races, creeds, and income levels.

When you factor in the creative industry you can see that it is the fastest growing industry in the nation. It consists of all businesses, both in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, involved with the production or distribution of the arts including the performing arts, literary arts, applied arts, humanities, media arts, support services, and art education. The creative industry provides employment for more then just artists, curators and musicians. The industry directly supports builders, accountants, printers, and an array of occupations spanning many other industries.

By making arts and tourism part of our 10-piont plan, the United States Conference of Mayors makes it emphatically clear that there is a need to address arts and culture as a viable and substantial subject of national importance. That is why I went to New Hampshire this past November to participate in the first ever presidential forum on the arts, co-sponsored by Americans for the Arts Action Fund to urge presidential candidates to focus on the arts. As a result of the forum, five of the candidates, two of whom are still running submitted platforms on the arts.

The nation's mayors unequivocally support full funding for arts and humanities agencies and support the National Endowment for the Arts. I beseech you to join me and my fellow mayors in supporting increase funding for arts education and recognize the importance that the nonprofit arts industry plays in the economic and cultural vitality of cities. Together, from all levels of government we can make a difference.

Conclusion

Honolulu is one of "The World's Top 10 Most Livable Cities." We believe it is the arts and culture that has helped Honolulu define itself as a global city. Similarly, the state of our arts and culture will help define us as a nation. Funding for arts and culture will also define how the future state of our cities' needs will be met when it comes to building "***Strong Cities, Strong Families, for a Strong America.***" On behalf of the US Conference of Mayors, I thank you for this opportunity to share with you the importance of the arts.