



**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  
Susan Browne  
Sean Connelly  
Randall Francisco  
Randall Fujiki  
Jill Kuramoto  
Michael Marshall  
Marcia Roberts-  
Deustch  
Janet Sato

Ex-Officio  
Chris Lee  
Jeanne Kapela

Executive Director  
Karen A. Ewald

Telephone  
808.586.0300

Fax  
808.586.0308

Website  
[sfca.hawaii.gov](http://sfca.hawaii.gov)

**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 1860\_HD2  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

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. 1860\_HD2 which designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriates moneys.

Public funding plays a crucial role in sustaining and enriching music performances, especially in ways that the private market alone often cannot. Public investment also has clear economic and social benefits. Music performances generate local employment, attract tourism, and contribute to lively public spaces. Beyond economics, they foster social cohesion by bringing people together, encouraging shared experiences, and strengthening community identity.

Grants and subsidies provide reliable support that helps artists and venues survive fluctuations in ticket sales, sponsorships, or economic downturns, ensuring long-term sustainability.

The State Foundation on Culture and the Arts encourages funding for arts and culture organizations throughout the state, including the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

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



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

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1860 HD2**  
**– RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

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

As Music and Artistic Director and President and CEO, respectively, of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, and we request your support of **HB1860 HD2**, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This designation would ensure **equal access to world-class symphonic music for all residents, regardless of where they live.**

Music is not only entertainment; it helps mental health, physical health, brain development, and socialization. It teaches concentration, perseverance, listening, and working together. Music brings people together and uplifts our communities, and HSO is a community service provider.

Providing State designation is important for both HSO and our state for a number of reasons:

**1. HSO Provides Significant Public Service to the State**

HSO delivers meaningful public service through cultural, educational, and artistic programming. It enhances access to high-quality music and promotes cultural engagement across Hawai'i. We are proud of all we offer at HSO, such as:

- More than 40 diverse concerts annually
- Free community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawai'i Seas
- Our Na Hoku Opio - Young Stars competition that showcases the talented young Hawai'i students
- Side-by-side projects with Hawai'i Youth Symphony

- A Masterworks Series that brings the world's best music and greatest artists to Hawai'i

Our HapaSymphony concerts that combine the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Keola Beamer, Jake Shimabukuro, and Raiatea Helm with the power of a full symphony orchestra

- Commissioning new works by living composers from around our Pacific region, embracing our geography as a Pacific orchestra
- Uniting the state's most important arts organizations under one umbrella in our groundbreaking Beethoven Festival and this year's Sounds of Shakespeare Festival
- The musicians are our greatest asset: We employ some of the United States' finest musicians to play in the HSO. They don't only play in the orchestra, though; they also play the vital role of educating our children
- Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies with vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion

---

## **2. HSO Has Deep Historical Roots in Hawai'i**

HSO (formerly the Honolulu Symphony) was founded in **1902**, making it one of the oldest orchestras in the United States west of the Rockies. Its longevity reflects a century-long bond with Hawai'i's communities and cultural heritage. This long history includes surviving world wars, the Great Depression, and major financial crises — demonstrating resilience that mirrors the perseverance of Hawai'i itself.

---

## **3. HSO is a Vital Cultural Institution Delivering Essential Public Service**

The orchestra's educational initiatives support thousands of children, addressing unequal distribution of arts education and improving academic and social outcomes through exposure to music.

---

## **4. It Reflects and Elevates Hawai'i's Cultural Identity**

HSO works with both world-renowned guest artists and local musicians, promoting Hawai'i-based talent and fostering cultural collaborations that reflect Hawai'i's unique heritage. Our programming includes classical masterworks, film concerts, pops performances, Hawaiian collaborations, and more, showcasing the cultural diversity of the islands and enriching local artistic life – for residents and visitors alike.

---

## **5. It Supports Local Musicians and Strengthens Hawai'i's Creative Economy**

HSO employs **85 professional musicians** and regularly commissions or collaborates with top-tier artists. This contributes to Hawai'i's creative economy and provides stable professional opportunities within the arts sector.

---

## In Summary

Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Orchestra of Hawai'i is supported by strong evidence that HSO:

- Serves the public good statewide
- Preserves and elevates Hawai'i's cultural identity
- Expands arts access and education
- Supports local professionals and the arts economy
- Has a 125-year historical legacy worth honoring

A **designated State Orchestra** would be a **cultural and economic asset**, supporting local jobs, driving tourism, and strengthening our communities through music.

Thank you for your support of **HB1860 HD2** to make symphonic music a lasting and meaningful part of life for all Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



Dane Lam  
Music and Artistic Director



Amy Iwano  
President and CEO





**SERVCO PACIFIC INC.**  
2850 PUKOLOA ST. STE. 300  
HONOLULU, HI 96819 USA

**O. 808.564.1300**  
**F. 808.564.1393**

[SERVCO.COM](http://SERVCO.COM)

Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair  
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

RE: HB 1860 HD2 - Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra – **In Support**  
Monday, March 16, 2026; 1:00 PM  
Conference room 224

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and members of the committee:

As a Board of Director of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) and on-behalf of Servco Pacific, Inc., I am writing in strong support of HB 1860 HD2, which designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

Founded in 1900, the HSO has become an integral part of our community, not only by hosting diverse concerts and programs featuring international performing artists but also by promoting local talent within Hawaii through its outreach and educational opportunities such as the Hapa Concert Series and No Hoku Opio youth competition. HSO also provides free concerts in parks, public spaces, and live streams to ensure access to all of Hawaii's residents.

By designating Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the "State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra," HB 1860 HD2 will enable HSO to obtain state funds and continue to deliver accessible and meaningful programs that benefits Hawaii's families, students, and communities.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 1860 HD2. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Peter Dames  
President & CEO

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:08:50 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>
Dana Rokosny	Testifying for Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill bring more arts education to the Hawaiian Islands.



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN  
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO  
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAI'I

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 1860 HD2 – RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**

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

My name is Dave Erdman, and I serve as Interim President and CEO of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i (RMH), a statewide nonprofit trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, and allied businesses across Hawai'i.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully submits testimony in support of HB 1860 HD2, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and provides support for its general operating costs.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has long been an important cultural institution in our state. For more than a century, the orchestra has contributed to Hawai'i's cultural identity, provided educational opportunities for students and young musicians, and delivered performances that bring communities together. The legislative findings included in this measure appropriately recognize the orchestra's historic role and the public purpose it serves through education programs, community concerts, and access to music for students and educators across the state.

From the perspective of the retail and business community, institutions such as the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra also contribute to the broader creative and visitor economy. Cultural events and performances draw residents and visitors into our communities, support nearby restaurants and retailers, and contribute to the vitality of our urban centers and neighborhood business districts.

Many RMH member businesses are long-time supporters of arts and cultural organizations in Hawai'i. A strong arts sector helps strengthen Hawai'i's overall quality of life and reinforces the values that make our islands a unique place to live, work, and visit.

Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra appropriately acknowledges the organization's longstanding service to the public and the cultural enrichment it provides to communities across the islands.

For these reasons, **Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to support HB 1860 HD2.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave Erdman  
Interim President & CEO  
Retail Merchants of Hawai'i

**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 1860 HD 2 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra***

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

As an organization dedicated to fostering music education and youth development across Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Youth Symphony recognizes and applauds the *significant* role that the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra plays in enriching the artistic landscape of our islands. The designation of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the Official State of Hawai‘i symphony orchestra will send a meaningful message on the importance of orchestras in our collective artistic & cultural landscape; one that will have positive reverberations for generations to come.

This recognition not only honors artistic excellence but also strengthens the foundation upon which its community engagement initiatives are built. An exemption for the HSO from chapter 42F has the potential to reduce HSO’s administrative burdens so that their leadership can focus more on community partnership development. National best practices indicate that stable, predictable support for organizations like the HSO will enhance their ability to serve as cultural anchors and educational partners.

We are grateful to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra for the many ways that they already help to encourage and inspire our young people, particularly via the flagship, **Side-by-Side collaborations** that we undertake together semiannually for HYS’ Youth Symphony and Pacific Music Institute orchestras. (A “Side-by-Side” is a rehearsal/concert event that takes place when the high school members of HYS sit next to an adult professional from HSO, kind of like joining the major leagues for the day! The magnitude of what these projects mean to our youth is best expressed by them: <https://youtu.be/5L5wn2ULFOg>)

Here are a few images from recent Side-by-Sides that have had great meaning for youth across our state:





& PACIFIC MUSIC INSTITUTE  
1350 S. King Street, Suite 201 • Honolulu, HI • 96814



HYS did not have a very strong or formalized relationship with the former Honolulu Symphony, but since the birth of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra in 2012, our two organizations have become frequent collaborators.

Over time, we have seen many alumni of HYS join the HSO's ranks. For years, it was difficult for our alums to imagine coming home without a professional orchestra. With HSO now an option, we are proud of the contingent who are able to return home to Hawai'i. They serve multiple roles in our community; not just as musicians, but as teachers, civic leaders, Royal Hawaiian Band members, and role models.

I encourage you also to read our blog post, "[From Student to Professional: HYS Alumni in the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra](#)," for more on this burgeoning career pathway, which has many, many community benefits.



With the advancement of this bill, we look forward to seeing what HSO will do to continue bringing our community together through music. Thank you for advancing HB1860!

Sincerely,

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

Randy Wong  
President & CEO (and alum), Hawai'i Youth Symphony  
Musician, Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra



ABC Stores  
766 Pohukaina Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-5391  
www.abcstores.com

Telephone: (808) 591-2550  
Fax: (808) 591-2039  
E-mail: mail@abcstores.com

---

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

**Re: HB1860 HD2 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra**

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the committee,

My name is Paul Kosasa, President and Chief Executive Officer of ABC Stores, a locally owned company that has proudly served Hawai‘i’s communities for more than seventy years. I also serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, a role I have held for the past fifteen years. I write in **support of HB1860 HD2**.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is a vital cultural institution that enriches our state through world-class performances, impactful educational programs, and meaningful community engagement. These activities depend on stable operating support, musicians, staff, facilities, production, and community partnerships, so the Symphony can continue serving students, families, kūpuna, and audiences across Hawai‘i.

As a business deeply rooted in Hawai‘i, ABC Stores recognizes the important role that arts and culture play in fostering vibrant communities and a well-rounded economy. The Symphony helps attract and retain talent, supports arts education, and strengthens Hawai‘i’s reputation as a place where culture, learning, and community are valued.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your thoughtful consideration of HB1860 HD2. We respectfully urge your support for the measure and the funds needed to strengthen the Symphony’s operations and community outreach on behalf of the people of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

Paul Kosasa  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
ABC Stores



**Senator Chris Lee, Chair**

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

Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Monday, March 16, 2026

HB1860 HD2 - Relating to Hawaii Symphony Orchestra - Support

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

HULI PAC supports HB1860 HD2, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and provides a framework for state support and legislative reporting.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has become an important part of Hawai'i's cultural landscape. In addition to hosting diverse concerts and programs featuring internationally recognized performers, the orchestra actively uplifts local talent and expands access to music through free concerts in parks and public spaces, educational outreach, and live-streamed performances available to residents across the islands.

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.

Public investment in the arts plays a crucial role in sustaining programs that the private market alone often cannot support. Cultural institutions like the symphony contribute not only to Hawai'i's cultural vitality but also to our broader economy—supporting local employment, attracting visitors, activating public spaces, and strengthening the creative sector.

Beyond the economic impact, music and the performing arts foster connection. They bring communities together, create shared cultural experiences, and help strengthen the social fabric of our islands.

By formally recognizing the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, this measure helps ensure the long-term sustainability of a cultural institution that has served our communities for generations while maintaining transparency through annual reporting to the Legislature.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1860 HD2. Mahalo.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 5:06:26 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 this measure, which would officially designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra. This designation is a meaningful and long-overdue recognition of an institution that has served as one of our state’s most treasured cultural pillars for well over a century.

**THE HSO IS A HISTORIC AND IRREPLACEABLE INSTITUTION**

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra traces its roots to 1900, making it one of the oldest orchestras in the United States west of the Rocky Mountains. For more than 125 years, it has been a cornerstone of musical excellence and community engagement, enriching Hawai‘i with performances of both classical and contemporary music. The HSO’s longevity alone speaks to its deep connection with the people of our state.

**THE HSO SERVES OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY**

The HSO is not merely a performance organization — it is a vital community institution. The orchestra reaches 140,000 residents annually in Hawai‘i and the Pacific through its performances and educational programs, which serve 3,000 students every year. Through youth competitions, school visits, masterclasses, and pre-concert lectures, the HSO actively cultivates the next generation of musicians and music lovers across our islands.

The HSO also reflects the unique cultural identity of Hawai‘i. Its programming blends Western classical music with the diverse cultural influences of Hawai‘i and the Pacific, ensuring that its offerings are genuinely of this place and for this community. Notably, a significant portion of its musicians are themselves products of Hawai‘i — a testament to the decades of investment in local musical talent that the orchestra has helped make possible.

**THE HSO SUPPORTS A BROADER ECOSYSTEM OF THE ARTS**

Designating the HSO as the State Symphony would recognize its central role in sustaining Hawai‘i’s broader arts ecosystem. The orchestra provides a critical mass of professional talent that makes many other things possible — including the Hawai‘i Youth Symphony, opera, ballet, chamber music, and university music programs. The ripple effect of a thriving professional

orchestra extends far beyond its concert hall, strengthening arts education and cultural life across our entire state.

#### STATE DESIGNATION SENDS A POWERFUL SIGNAL

Officially designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra would send a clear message: that Hawai'i values its cultural heritage, invests in the arts, and recognizes the symphony as a statewide — not merely local — treasure. This designation, paired with the accountability measures included in the bill such as annual legislative reporting, reflects a responsible and transparent approach to public support for the arts.

#### CONCLUSION

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has earned this recognition through more than a century of service to the people of Hawai'i. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure and take this important step in affirming our state's commitment to the arts, culture, and community.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Ezgi Green  
Waialua, Hawai'i

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 7:13:52 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>
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1860, HD2 passage this legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 7:43:06 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher LaDue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

# Testimony in Strong Support on HB1860 HD2

## Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra

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

My name is Christopher LaDue, and I write in strong support of HB1860, which would designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra and provide stable funding to expand its educational and community mission.

Music in Hawai‘i is not a luxury; it is part of how we learn to listen to one another and to the world around us. Institutions like the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra play a vital role in the state’s cultural and educational infrastructure. Over time, the HSO has grown into a cultural institution shaped by Hawai‘i and uniquely of Hawai‘i. Through initiatives such as the HapaSymphony Series, performances featuring traditional Hawaiian music, and commissions of local composers, the Orchestra brings a distinctly Pacific perspective to the symphonic tradition.

HSO’s programs increasingly weave together music, culture, and environment. Original works tell stories of our ocean, native species, and cultural values, while collaborations with the University of Hawai‘i, scientists, Kumu Hula, and cultural practitioners incorporate mele, hula, and visual arts alongside orchestral scores. Education efforts such as Nā Hōkū ‘Ōpio (Young Stars) and partnerships with UH place this living culture directly into the hands of students and communities.

I am especially encouraged that HB1860 links funding to free and accessible opportunities for students and educators. Many children would never encounter a live orchestra without this intentional outreach. Experiences with professional musicians nurture creativity, discipline,

empathy, and a deeper relationship to place, qualities that serve Hawai‘i far beyond the concert hall.

Music also plays a unique role in fostering unity. In a place as culturally diverse as Hawai‘i, shared musical experiences create common ground across generations, backgrounds, and communities. Sitting together in a performance, or participating in a workshop, allows people to experience connection without requiring shared language or perspective. In this way, the Symphony helps strengthen the social fabric that holds our islands together.

Designating the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as our State Symphony recognizes and strengthens this public service mission, enabling the orchestra to expand programs that bring music directly into schools, libraries, hospitals, and community spaces across our islands.

The bill’s accountability provisions and annual reporting requirements thoughtfully balance public investment with transparency and stewardship, ensuring that state resources are used responsibly while expanding access to music education and cultural experiences for residents across Hawai‘i.

Recognizing the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as our State Symphony affirms that the arts are essential public infrastructure, as necessary to our collective well-being as parks, libraries, and schools. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1860 so that music, culture, environmental awareness, and shared belonging may continue to reach keiki, educators, families, and communities across our islands.

I respectfully reiterate my strong support for this measure as it moves through the legislative process.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued service to the people of Hawai‘i.

**Christopher LaDue**

Community member and supporter of arts accessibility in Hawai‘i

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 6:50:12 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>
kenneth Fehling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is extremely important to have the Hawaii Symphony to represent the State of Hawaii. Major cities have Symphony Orchestras. Having the Symphony in Honolulu helps make it a major city. Also, Hawaii is in the middle of the ocean so that it is a very long trip to go to another locaiton for to hear a Symphony Orchestra rather than right here in Honolulu. We enjoy concerts all the time and enjoyed the symphony so much when they played the Nutcracker Suite for the ballet during the Holidays.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 9:50:19 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 the public benefit the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra provides for our community.

With aloha,

Dave Ball

Waialae-Kahala

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 10:32:42 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Maurer	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-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 11:02:27 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Browne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Thank you for advancing this bill to a hearing. The Hawai'i Symphony is a treasure to be shared and appreciated by everyone, no matter their age or income status. By designating the symphony "Hawai'i Symphony" and supporting it with public funding, we demonstrate a commitment to equity in the arts. Children who are able to see and appreciate classical music grow up to support it and understand the many opportunities that music brings to our lives. Please keep the arts alive and available for all.**

**Mahalo,**

Susan Browne

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 11:47:11 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:02:11 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>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is great. To finally have an official state orchestra. Since its formation several years ago the Hawai'i Symphony has travelled statewide and in addition to performing paid concerts also provides free concerts in the community. Please move this bill forward.

lynne matusow

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:28:27 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 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-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:33:18 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>
santosh krinsky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a positive force in our community and a positive benefit for our tourist industry. The Symphony is a world-class orchestra and uses its position to provide support to youth orchestra, youth concerts, free community concerts and support of the arts generally with their collaborations with the ballet and the theatre and chorus organizations. They support culture, education and tourism, and also work to ensure that music by Native Hawaiian composers and artists has a platform, while they also feature some of the finest classical music from around the world. They are worth supporting as the official Symphony Orchestra of the State of Hawaii.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:33:57 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>
Carlynn M Wolfe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This designation honors our musicians and establishes Honolulu as part of the great cities to support the Arts. HSO is a backbone of our community.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:34:32 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>
Karen Turner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fully support the HSO to be designated Hawai'i State Orchestra. It is a wonderful orchestra deserving every support and recognition. Important part of cultural offerings.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:35:10 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:

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony. I, Kirk Shitaoka, as a supporter of the Hawaii Youth Symphony, fully support H.B. 1860 HD1, designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. It is critical that the arts thrive in Hawai'i, at all levels and for all ages. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a world-class symphonic ensemble that we should support and cherish. Mahalo.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:37:20 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>
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Thank you. Martha Nakajima, Honolulu

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:43:20 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>
Tanya K.D. Alana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:48:30 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 in the Hawai'i Youth Symphony, I strongly support HB1860 HD1. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra plays an important role in inspiring young musicians and supporting music education throughout our state.

My child has been deeply inspired through participation in youth orchestra programs and opportunities to learn from professional musicians. Programs and collaborations between HSO and youth ensembles provide meaningful educational experiences that encourage students to continue developing their musical skills.

Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony recognizes its artistic and educational contributions to our community. Supporting institutions like HSO helps ensure that future generations of students in Hawai'i will continue to have access to high-quality music education and cultural experiences.

Mahalo for supporting the arts and music education in Hawai'i.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

The Senate

The Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2026

Hearing Date and Time: March 16, 2026 at 1 PM

Re: **HB 1860, HD 2 RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Written Testimony Only (In Support)

CHAIR LEE, VICE CHAIR INOUYE, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Lloyd Lim and I am testifying in my individual capacity in strong support of HB 1860, HD 1 designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the Hawaii State orchestra and providing partial funding. The current HSO is a vastly superior orchestra to the HSO of 20 to 50 years ago. This is an excellent orchestra on the upswing with great future potential for Hawaii. The string section sound would surprise anyone. I have heard live performances by the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony and the St. Louis Symphony. I feel as if I have a basis for comparison. Recently, the HSO put on the Mozart Oboe Concerto and the Mahler 9 (a complex piece). I had a surreal feeling as I came out of the hall—could this fine a concert really be done in Hawaii, and with that big an audience turnout? Yes!

Many of the orchestra musicians are also music teachers in our community helping to raise our kids. Music education isn't just about making kids happy or helping them to fit into more rarefied workplaces; it is about brain development, giving kids a head start, a competitive advantage.

But you don't have to take my word for it. *Columbia Magazine* (Spring/Summer 2015) noted that Columbia Medical School considers a music background in admissions because it can assist both diagnosis skills and the motor control needed for surgery. Also, *The Great Courses* class Music and the Brain taught by Professor Anniruddh D. Patel noted that music training also has a significant overlapping effect on the development of verbal skills.

I have gone to many HSO concerts and have been using social media to talk about HSO in the hopes that the word will get out to folks with an interest in classical music who might use it as an excuse to visit Hawaii. I interact with classical music buffs in the US mainland, Japan, Hong Kong, England, Germany and Italy. We live in a troubled world, but because most orchestral music is without words, it can form a basis for relationships that avoids contentious political issues.

As a kid growing up in Honolulu, I took a risk being a classical music buff. It made me suspect. I'd like to see that viewpoint change. Not everyone likes classical music, but that is often because they had a bad initial exposure to it. There is material for pretty much everyone in classical music, and over time you can climb into more of it as you like. The HSO has worked hard to become an orchestra that can appeal far beyond Hawaii. It would be a shame not to support it when it could do so much for us.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony, and for your favorable consideration.

*Lloyd Lim* 1525 Wilder Ave #1008, Honolulu, HI 96822

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:50:55 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>
Bill Ellis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill!

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:52:18 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 bodnar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Waikiki resident, I wholeheartedly support this bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:52:21 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>
Kenny Endo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a world class orchestra and deserves this recognition and support. I support HB1860 HD2.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:53:16 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>
Kirby Fowle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of the proposal to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state orchestra of Hawai'i.

The orchestra's concerts create spaces where people of many backgrounds can gather to experience live music together.

Hawai'i is known around the world for its music, creativity, and cultural richness.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued support of the arts in our state.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:56:29 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolann Biederman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I write as a resident who is deeply excited about **HB 1860 HD2**, which will recognize the vital role that the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra plays in our state.

The richness and diversity of the arts in Hawai‘i – music, dance, visual arts, Hawaiian culture, media, crafts – impressed and inspired me from the day I arrived 38 years ago and I have supported the arts ever since. I've worked as a consultant to the nonprofit sector for the past 25 years in the areas of executive transition, grant writing, special events, and project management. Many of my clients are performing arts organizations. Through first-hand experience, I can say without reservation that funding that designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as Hawai‘i’s orchestra supports not only the core organization, but also many wonderful artistic partnerships and creative dreams that will enrich, educate and uplift residents and visitors throughout the state now and for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Carolann Biederman, 44-391 Nilu St. #4, Kaneohe, HI 96744

[cabc.consulting@gmail.com](mailto:cabc.consulting@gmail.com)

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:57:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealani Makaiwi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Kealani Makaiwi, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of HB1860 HD2, relating to the support and continuation of the [Honolulu Symphony Orchestra](#) and the broader symphonic arts community in Hawai‘i.

Music has been a meaningful part of my life since childhood. I grew up watching my father come home from work many long evenings at the concert hall during symphony performances as an audio engineer. Because of his work, I was able to see firsthand the dedication, discipline, and collaboration that go into every performance. Those experiences helped me understand how important institutions like the symphony are—not only for the arts community but for families, workers, and young people who find inspiration through music.

I have also seen the impact of symphonic music in our schools. One of the violinists connected to the symphony community, Ms. Shohet, has served as a violin teacher at Waiiau Elementary School. She taught my children, along with many other students, how to play the violin and how to read music. Her work introduced countless keiki to the beauty and discipline of music, opening doors for creativity, confidence, and lifelong learning.

Additionally, I had the special opportunity some years ago to perform alongside the symphony with my two kumu as part of Na Kau ‘Elua. Being able to share our cultural performance in collaboration with the symphony was a powerful experience that demonstrated how classical music and Hawaiian cultural expression can uplift and complement one another. Moments like that show the symphony’s potential to bring communities together and celebrate the diversity of arts in [Honolulu](#) and across [Hawai‘i](#).

Supporting the symphony is not only about preserving music—it is about supporting educators, cultural exchange, community engagement, and opportunities for our keiki to experience the arts in meaningful ways.

As a mother and educator, I believe that exposure to music strengthens creativity, discipline, and cultural appreciation. Programs connected to the symphony inspire young musicians and provide pathways for students who may otherwise never have access to this form of artistic expression.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support and pass HB1860 HD2 to help sustain the symphonic arts and the many educators, musicians, and students whose lives are enriched by them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to supporting the arts in our community.

Respectfully,

Kealani Makaiwi

Mother & Educator

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:59:08 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>
Melanie Yukumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melanie Yukumoto, and I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB1860 HD2, which would designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai‘i.

I have had the privilege of performing as a first call utility clarinetist with the orchestra beginning in its earlier years as the Honolulu Symphony and continuing today with the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra. Through both eras of the organization, the orchestra has provided me with meaningful professional opportunities and the chance to collaborate with extraordinary musicians.

Beyond the music, the orchestra has always felt like a family to me. The musicians, staff, and community supporters share a deep commitment to bringing symphonic music to the people of Hawai‘i. Over the years, I have seen firsthand how the orchestra enriches our community through inspiring performances and educational outreach that connects young people and audiences across the islands with orchestral music.

The continuation of the orchestra from the Honolulu Symphony to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is also a testament to the resilience and dedication of our local arts community. Recognizing the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony would honor not only its artistic excellence but also its enduring role in the cultural life of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Yukumoto

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:00:39 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>
Heidi Shimada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i. Like sports, music and the arts are critical to building and sustaining community and developing well rounded citizens. We need to maintain as many opportunities for Hawai'i locals to have reasons to stay here.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:09:07 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>
Roslyn Catracchia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Friday March 13, 2026

Re: Testimony in support of HB1860 HD2

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in full, whole-hearted support of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra becoming the official State Symphony of Hawaii.

I am 61 years old, and I've lived in Hawaii since my family moved here in 1966. My mother (Beebe Freitas) and father moved here from New York, where she was the choral accompanist for Leonard Bernstein (composer of West Side Story and so much more). She taught at Juilliard, played for the Boston Pops – she was among the best in New York. They moved here when it got too dangerous in New York City, and my parents made the joint decision to raise their children in a safe, nurturing place.

My mom thought she was giving up her musical career. But she chose family first. And when they arrived, her first job was as a church organist making 75 cents an hour. Soon after that, she became a teacher at the University of Hawaii. Soon after that, she became the keyboard specialist for the Honolulu Symphony (piano, celeste, harpsichord, etc). And soon after that joined the Hawaii Opera Theatre staff. And she began to play the organ for Punahou chapels daily, as well as the organist at First Presbyterian Church.

She held so many jobs as a brilliant musician to pay the bills. She's one of the lucky ones. She plays piano. There is a big need for pianists/accompanists in different fields. For other musicians, it's not so easy to make ends meet. You can't show up with just a trombone at a wedding to play Here Comes the Bride ☹

I have been witness to decades of change and seen the struggles of excellent, exceptional musicians who chose to make Hawaii their home. And I've seen those who couldn't gather enough gigs to make ends meet any longer and they had to leave. There was a mass exodus of exceptional musicians in the early 80s, I believe. Two of my mom's best friends were among those who left. The principal oboist for the symphony, Tom Boyd, chose Los Angeles and played in the "Hollywood orchestra" for countless movies. The principal clarinetist, David Shifrin, moved to New York and became the winner of the Avery Fisher Career Grant and "is in constant demand as an orchestral soloist." They both wanted to remain in Hawaii.

There is something about the deep beauty and artistic nature of Hawaii that calls to brilliant, wonderful musicians. But the cost of living here is one of the highest in the country. And musicians in Hawaii also have a very unique position of often offering their gifts and talents for free or for much less than working wages because that is what we do for each other. We show up, we play. We love and support. While I'm not a symphony musician myself, I'm one of the grateful souls who receives the gift of their world class music.

I hope the Senate Committee will strongly consider recognizing the HSO's decades of true artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

Sincerely,

Roslyn Catracchia

P.S. I would be very happy to share more about why the symphony means so much to me.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:38:13 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>
William J M. Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The HSO is one of Hawai'i's greatest treasures. Dedicated, talented, hard-working people with a brilliant young conductor, Dane Lam, they have worked hard to have programs that appeal to a very wide range of Hawai'i locals. We have a world-class orchestral team here: let's support it as best we can. I'm not even a great music lover, but from the performances I have recently started to attend, I'm becoming one.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:42:09 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>
Ellen Wagner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill to make the Hawaii Symphony the official state symphony.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 1:46:53 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>
Joanne Amberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this bill. HSO's has decades of artistic excellence and plays a vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands. We need this more than ever.

Mahalo for listening,

Joanne Amberg

March 13, 2026

Dear Senate WLA Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support for HB 1860 HD2: Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

The Hawaii Symphony fulfills a vital role in our community by providing access to live orchestral music performed by professional musicians. My father, Floyd Uchima, was bassoon principal with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra during a period in the 1960s and was also a University of Hawaii professor of music. My brothers (Gordon and Burt) and I were fortunate to have attended many symphony concerts featuring world class musicians during our formative years. As senior citizens, we continue to be active as teachers, performers, and creators of music. I believe that our early exposure to high quality music played by a live orchestra provided opportunities to be inspired and developed a sense of valuing music as a means of creative expression.

In these economically challenging times for professional orchestras, it is vital that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra receive regular funding from the government to continue presenting its performances and programs. Our Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is an invaluable community resource and cultural institution committed to presenting high quality music performances that perpetuate the art of music in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Eileen Uchima

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:10:39 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!

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:13:56 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>
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I strongly SUPPORT passing this bill because recognizing the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra will show that we prioritize the arts in the state and give the public another outlet from the daily stressors of life. The HSO is a joy and gem in our community that we must value and share with future generations. Everyone who has a chance to witness HSO perform is experiencing magic in real life. HSO deserve state support NOW. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Mahalo,

Michelle

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:14:56 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>
Victoria R Pasek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My late father was an elementary music teacher in Santa Monica, CA. I grew up knowing his students and fellow instructors, and attended his recitals all the time. I remember how he told me his students said learning music helped them with math, that they found it opened up their imagination, that they loved playing their instruments. Lucky for him, the school district felt highly about the arts and never cut the programs. But other schools did.

The arts are so important and music is vital to a well rounded education. I applaud the efforts of the Hawaii's Symphony to bring music to the students if the Aloha State, and ask that the legislature support it as well.

I recently attended a concert in Honolulu by the renowned composer Joe Hisaishi. I met music teachers and students from all over the islands and further afield, I myself managed to snag a ticket the day they went on sale and made the journey from Los Angeles. Because music still matters to me.

Thank you. Music in our schools, forever!

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:46:26 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diann Karin Lynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Committee,

I am writing to register my strong support of **HB1860 HD2** to designate the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i**. It's time to recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands!

Mahalo  
Diann K Lynn  
Mō'ili'ili

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:52:00 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>
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill would recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

hawaii kai voter

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:02:06 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Schweitzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on HB1860 RE: The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra

I was a musician in the Honolulu/Hawai‘i Symphony for 45 years, from 1971 to 2016. In that time I witnessed and participated in many momentous events. Each one left an indelible impression – indeed, changed my life.

One such event was the Symphony’s trip to Kaua‘i in 1992 in the aftermath of Hurricane ‘Iniki. Coconut palms had no fronds; power lines were down, roofs of buildings had blown off, but hundreds of people came to the park to hear the orchestra. They were hugging, singing, and crying when the sounds of “Hawai‘i Pono‘i” and “Hawai‘i Aloha” reached their ears. It was a great moment of healing for the entire island.

Another event was the last public performance by Rosemary Clooney on an HSO Pops Concert. I wrote about it, along with other factors that prove the Hawai‘i Symphony’s worth, in this excerpt from my book, *The Arts from the Bottom Up*:

**To the Editor: On “Does Honolulu Need the Symphony?”**

Let me illustrate the value of arts institutions with the Symphony’s Grammy-nominated CD of its concert with the late Rosemary Clooney. The CD was an archive of a Symphony Pops concert, part of the regular pops series that took place every few weeks on the Blaisdell Center stage, part of the symphony’s ongoing public service mission. It was a magical concert, which ended with a dying Clooney saying, “Thank you for one of the best nights of my life.”

There were many forces that made that performance happen at such a magically high artistic level, but it all began with the existence of a resident professional orchestra with the artistic depth and organizational sophistication to bring all those forces together. Simply stated, Hawaii needs an orchestra so that nights like that are possible, so that our citizens can have the opportunity to experience art of the same life-changing quality and power as in every other major city in the world. And it is not enough to listen to CDs or import touring orchestras from elsewhere. We need a resident orchestral institution that reflects and is responsive and answerable to the community that owns it.

For that reason, government recognition and funding is not just necessary, it is desirable, because it is important that the orchestra be owned by all the people, not just by the moneyed elite, so that

all of us can claim a piece of the symphony and share common responsibility for it. If the costs of the symphony are shared broadly over our entire population in the form of donations, ticket purchases, and taxpayer subsidies, each person's burden of keeping the symphony healthy and flourishing is light.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:07:59 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ARNOLD A. ALCONCEL	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1860 HD2

Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the Official State Symphony of Hawai'i

To: Members of the Hawai'i State Senate Committee Hearing HB 1860 HD2

Hearing Date: Monday, March 16, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

---

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

I write in strong support of HB 1860 HD2, a bill that would formally designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra(HSO) as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i. This recognition is both appropriate and long overdue, honoring an institution that has provided decades of artistic excellence, cultural leadership, and meaningful community engagement across our islands.

For generations, the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has served as one of our state's premier cultural organizations. Through its outstanding musicianship and commitment to artistic integrity, the orchestra has consistently delivered world-class performances that enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike. Its concerts showcase the timeless masterpieces of orchestral literature while also celebrating contemporary composers and diverse musical traditions that reflect the unique cultural tapestry of Hawai'i.

Beyond the concert hall, the impact of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra extends deeply into our communities. The orchestra plays a vital educational role, reaching thousands of students each year through youth concerts, school partnerships, and outreach programs. These initiatives introduce young people to the beauty and discipline of orchestral music, inspire creativity, and nurture the next generation of musicians, artists, and arts supporters. 🎵

In many cases, HSO performances provide students with their first opportunity to experience a full symphony orchestra live, an experience that can be transformative. Exposure to high-level

artistic performance helps cultivate listening skills, emotional expression, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts—qualities that benefit not only individual students but also the broader community.

The orchestra's programming also strengthens Hawai'i's cultural landscape by presenting diverse musical offerings that bring together classical music, film scores, contemporary works, and collaborations with local artists. These programs create spaces where audiences from all backgrounds can gather and share in the universal language of music. Such experiences reinforce the sense of connection and shared identity that is so important in our island communities.

Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony would provide well-deserved recognition for the organization's longstanding commitment to artistic excellence and public service. It would affirm the State of Hawai'i's dedication to supporting the arts and acknowledging institutions that elevate our cultural life.

Importantly, this designation would also highlight Hawai'i as a place where arts and culture are valued as essential components of education, community wellbeing, and economic vitality. A thriving arts ecosystem strengthens tourism, enhances quality of life for residents, and helps position Hawai'i as a global cultural destination.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 1860 HD2 and recognize the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i. This action would honor the orchestra's remarkable legacy while encouraging continued artistic growth and community impact for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued support of arts and culture throughout our state.

Respectfully submitted,

Arnold A. Alconcel

Band Director, Castle High School 1996-2026

General Music Teacher, Kalakaua Intermediate School 1993-1996

Band Director, Kaimuki Intermediate School 1992-1993

Band Director, Aiea Intermediate School 1992

Former President, Oahu Band Directors Association (OBDA)

Former Chairman, OBDA High School Select Band

Lead Director, Hawai'i All-State Marching Band, Tournament of Roses Parade Pasadena, California 2024



**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:24:59 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>
Margaret Murchie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please please support the Honolulu Symphony. I went last weekend and the mix of Manoa Theatre, Honolulu Choral & Symphony doing Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream . It was easily understood and the orchestra was amazing. There was a really good mix of ages and I am going again. I love their summer sessions at the Waikiki Shell. We need our keiki to experience all types of music. Mahalo for your consideration.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1860 proposing that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra be designated as the official symphony orchestra of the State of Hawai'i.

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has served as a cornerstone of Hawai'i's cultural life. Through its performances, educational programs, and community outreach, the orchestra has enriched the lives of residents and visitors across the islands. Its outstanding conductor and musical director Dane Lam and its musicians represent a remarkable level of artistry and professionalism, bringing world-class symphonic music to our state while also celebrating the unique cultural heritage of Hawai'i.

Designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i's official symphony orchestra would recognize the vital role it plays in our community. The orchestra provides accessible concerts for families, students, and seniors, and collaborates with schools, other arts organizations and local artists to expand arts education throughout the state. These efforts help cultivate the next generation of musicians, inspire creativity in our keiki, and strengthen appreciation for the performing arts.

The orchestra also serves as an important cultural ambassador for Hawai'i. Its performances showcase the richness and diversity of our islands' artistic life, contributing to the vibrancy of our cultural landscape and enhancing Hawai'i's reputation as a place where the arts flourish alongside our natural beauty.

Official designation as the State's orchestra would honor the dedication of the musicians, staff, and supporters who have sustained the orchestra and would affirm the importance of the performing arts in Hawai'i's identity and future. Such a designation would also signal the State's commitment to supporting institutions that foster creativity, education, and community connection.

Mahalo for considering this testimony and for your continued support of the arts in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

Worldster & Patricia Lee

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:29:10 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>
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing to support HB1860. This recognition would help ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to thrive in our islands, enriching our community for generations to come. It will be particularly helpful for those who live on neighbor islands.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Marcia Kemble Makiki

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:32:45 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>
Patrick Patterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support making the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra the official Hawaii State Symphony Orchestra. The symphony is skilled, and contributes deeply to our community in a time which requires a recognition of the value of art, of humanity, and of the efforts and performance of human beings. HSO contributes to our community, to our historical memory, and to our ohana in countless ways. Please vote yes on this measure.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 4:12:40 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>
Linda Newton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support this bill to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official symphony of the State of Hawaii.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 5:12:10 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>
Autumn Woods	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1860 HD2, which would designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official “State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra” and provide vital funding for its continued operations. As both a longtime subscriber and proud member of the HSO staff, I have seen firsthand the incredible reach and impact of this organization across our islands.

My family first connected with the HSO during the pandemic, when we streamed concerts from home. That experience inspired us to become Masterworks subscribers in 2021, and attending live performances has since become an important part of our lives. My daughter, a young musician, was especially impacted, she conducted the orchestra at the Waikīkī Shell, interned with the staff for a school project, and later volunteered after graduation. Today, she is pursuing music as part of her college studies, thanks in no small part to the inspiration and opportunities provided by the HSO.

Over the past year as Director of Advancement, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing how deeply this orchestra is embedded in our community. HSO musicians perform in schools, mentor students, and bring music into public parks, shopping centers, and neighborhoods—often reaching audiences who have never experienced live orchestral music before. The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is more than a performance ensemble. It is a cultural cornerstone that connects people of all ages and backgrounds through music. Its musicians are not only world-class artists, but also dedicated educators and community partners who contribute to Hawai‘i’s vibrant cultural landscape.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1860 HD2 and recognize the unique role the HSO plays in enriching our state. With your help, we can ensure this treasured institution continues to inspire, educate, and connect communities across Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Autumn Woods  
Director of Advancement  
Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 5:28:51 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>
Jacqueline Beckman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Aloha Legislatures,

I ask your support of HB1860 HD2 to ensure that we recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

Mahalo,

Jackie Beckman

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 6:31:04 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>
Uy Thanh Ly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of Hawaii, I support HB1860 to make HSO the official state symphony. My vote is to recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and it's vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 8:23:21 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:

- **Student voice version:**
  - *As a **student**, I SUPPORT HB 2117 because students like me benefit when music programs are easier to find and better supported. A statewide arts map would help families like mine see what opportunities exist nearby, from school ensembles to community programs. The Arts, and especially Music, are essential to student success, not optional. This bill also helps funders understand where programs are needed most, so more students across Hawai'i can access music education.*

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 9:12:08 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>
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support HB1860.** Thank you for supporting this important bill too.

Ted Meehan

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 9:47:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Antonelis. PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly support HB1860 HD2**, now scheduled for a Senate Committee hearing, would designate the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i**. This bill would recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 10:49:38 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>
Jennifer Abee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 9:19:00 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yahna Kawaa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: The Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee. Measure: HB 1860, HD2  
Hearing Date: Monday, March 16, 2026  
Testifier: Yahna Kawa'a, Educator and Resident of Kailua

Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1860 / SB 2603

To the Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in strong support of the measure to provide permanent funding and State Orchestra designation for the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO). I write to you today with a dual perspective: as a lifelong devotee of the arts and as an educator serving a community where music is a vital, yet often under-resourced, part of our keiki's lives.

Bridging the Gap in our Schools: I teach in a public school where we see firsthand the disparity in arts access. In our Hawaiian Immersion program, where music and chant are foundational to Hawaiian-medium education, our kumu work tirelessly to integrate music into school events. However, we lack a permanent music teacher. The provision in this bill for free admission for public school students and teachers is transformative. For our students, most of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch, this bill ensures that a child's zip code does not determine their access to beauty and inspiration.

A Lifetime of Connection: My own journey with this ensemble began as a child, performing as a "bonbon" in the *Nutcracker*. As an adult, I sought out a symphony cellist for private lessons right here on the Windward side to bring music back into my life. I have seen how the "full experience" of a live orchestra—from the first tap of the conductor's baton—cannot be replaced.

I recall sitting in the balcony during a performance and hearing a high school student behind me—someone seeing the production for the very first time—whisper, "Wow, that is so beautiful." In that moment, the music created absolute beauty for a child who may have never experienced it before. While the music eventually fades, that sense of wonder remains.

---

The Music of Hawai'i Nei: A Poem

How sad if they would fade away, And create a hole where there was none today. The music  
always fills our soul, An excellence we must extol.

For music transports to a special place, Where dancers move with fluid grace. Our commitment  
to them will remain—Please hear our plaintive refrain.

For the swishing of the baton, Makes the music carry on. It fills our minds and souls and hearts,  
From them, our loyalty must never depart.

As their fingers move across the strings, A bellowing warmth is what it brings. We are wrapped  
in the music as they play, HSO is the music of Hawai'i nei.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 6:09:19 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>
James Shattuck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill that will designate Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i. This bill would recognize the HSO's decades of artistic excellence and its vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands. It will also ensure that music remains a vibrant part of our community's future.

James Shattuck, supporter of the Arts and live performance.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 9:20:44 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>
Richard Byron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is truly a world class organization. Having witnessed the evolution and growth of the orchestra over the past 15 years since we moved to Hawaii we are proud to support them in any way we can. We are looking forward to the future with the orchestra and building more support to continue the excellent programs they deliver and the significant contribution they make to the community. By the way, the variety and quality of performances is fantastic. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 10:16:25 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>
Peter R Daspit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support!!! Great folks doing a great job in a great state - they deserve the recognition - there is little enough that we can do, and this is long overdue. Mahalo!

Peter Daspit

Kailua

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 11:40:54 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>
Elizabeth Janus	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am currently a subscriber to the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and have personally donated to the support the Hawai'i Symphony. However, I oppose this bill because in terms of priorities that the State of Hawai'i should be funding, the orchestra is low on the list. With the Governor asking for tax cuts to be delayed to address a budget shortfall, it should be clear that Hawai'i does not have the excess funding and capacity to support the Symphony at this time. The State should prioritize things like fixing the roads and other infrastructure and improving the provision of state services. Those private entities that support the Symphony, like me, can continue to support the Symphony out of our own funds, but this should not come from tax payer money.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 2:04:32 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>
Luanna H Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a treasure that deserves public support. This legislation will help to ensure that it receives the ongoing financial support and official recognition to continue its service as a cultural icon of Hawai'i. Notable are the creative and culturally relevant initiatives by the HSO to build a wider and diverse audience for its performances, such as the Hapa Symphonies that feature Hawaiian music and musical artists with a full orchestra.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 12:42:19 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>
Lee Brightwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please designate the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i**. They have provided decades of artistic excellence and play a vital role in enriching our community through world-class performances, music education, and cultural programming across our islands.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 4:14:54 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>
John C Jack Lewin MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: WLA Chair Senator Chriss Lee;  
Chair Senator Lorraine Inouye;

WLA Vice  
and Honorable Members

FROM: Jack Lewin MD, as an individual

RE: HB1860 HD2

Testimony: I enthusiastically support this bill and the Honolulu Symphony. Thank you for supporting this measure. --Jack

## Testimony in Support of HB1860 HD2

### Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the Official State Symphony of Hawai'i

Aloha,

My name is Barry Whitfield, and I am a proud supporter of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO). I am writing in strong support of HB1860 HD2, which would designate the HSO as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is one of the oldest orchestras in the United States and a cultural treasure for our islands. Its musicians bring world-class artistry to our community, performing music that reflects both global traditions and the unique cultural heritage of Hawai'i. The Orchestra's commitment to education is equally significant. Through school concerts, youth programs, and partnerships with local educators, the HSO inspires thousands of students each year and helps cultivate the next generation of artists and creative thinkers.

Designating the HSO as the State Symphony is more than symbolic. It affirms Hawai'i's dedication to the arts, strengthens our cultural identity, and supports an institution that consistently enriches our community. The Orchestra contributes to our economy, enhances our quality of life, and serves as an ambassador of Hawai'i's artistic excellence.

HB1860 HD2 recognizes an organization that has served our state with distinction for many years. I respectfully urge you to pass this measure and honor the vital role the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra plays in our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Barry Whitfield

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 7:10:33 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>
Scott Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha... On behalf of myself and my wife I am restating my support for this legislation. Aloha and made the music continue to elevate and enrich the people of Hawaii. Aloha, Scott Schultz.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:03:58 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>
Jon Storm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of making the HSO the official state symphony orchestra.

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 8:23:16 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>
Alda Lam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For decades, the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) has served as a cornerstone of our state’s cultural life. Through world-class performances, educational outreach, and community partnerships, the HSO has enriched the lives of residents and visitors across our islands. Designating the HSO as the official State Symphony appropriately recognizes the organization’s longstanding artistic excellence and its deep commitment to serving the people of Hawai‘i.

Beyond the concert hall, the HSO plays a vital role in music education and community engagement. Its programs introduce young people to orchestral music, provide opportunities for students to learn from professional musicians, and help cultivate the next generation of artists and audiences. These efforts strengthen our schools, inspire creativity, and expand access to the arts for communities throughout the state.

I can personally attest to the profound impact the orchestra can have on young people. As a high school student, I had the extraordinary opportunity to perform as a soloist with the orchestra. Standing on stage with professional musicians was an unforgettable experience that challenged and inspired me, and it demonstrated the HSO’s commitment to supporting and uplifting young local musicians.

The orchestra also contributes to Hawai‘i’s cultural identity and economy. Its performances showcase the talent of local and visiting musicians while enhancing the vibrancy of our performing arts landscape. Recognizing the HSO as the official State Symphony affirms the importance of the arts as part of Hawai‘i’s heritage and future.

HB1860 HD2 is a meaningful way to acknowledge the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra’s decades of service and its continued impact on our communities. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

The Hawaii Symphony is an important cultural institution that should be shared with the entire state of Hawaii. Supporting HSO provides an opportunity to enrich the lives of everyone in Hawaii. The orchestra is made up of eighty exceptional musicians and is lead by a dynamic conductor and music director, Dan Lam. The orchestra is also most fortunate to have the talents and skills of its superb resident composer, Michael Thomas Foumai.

I discovered HSO four years ago when I moved to Honolulu. I was astonished to find out how exceptional this orchestra is. The fact that so many talented professional musicians are present here on Oahu in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is amazing. They play a wide variety of styles including classical, Hawaiian, movie scores, and jazz. The versatility is incredible.

HSO has certainly enhanced my life. The pre-concert talks are very informative where both the guest artist(s) and Dane Lam, the conductor, discuss the program providing background, history, and anecdotes about what we are about to see. My knowledge of classical music, as well as the music of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim has been expanded through HSO concerts. My first exposure to the Australian didgeridoo occurred at an HSO concert. My introduction to the Easter Island pianist, Mahani Teave, took place at an HSO concert. I've enjoyed concerts featuring local artists such as Jake Shimabukuro, Keola Beamer, Manoa Valley Theater< Honolulu Jazz Quartet and the Oahu Choral Society. And, the orchestra also presents Keiki concerts such as Peter and the Wolf.

HSO is truly an Oahu treasure and it needs to be expanded to our neighboring islands. I urge you to pass HB1860.

Robin Ching

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 12:57:54 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>
Robin Takata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. The HSO is a world class symphony and Hawaii is fortunate to have them. It's difficult to recruit such fine musicians and they add much to the enjoyment of music for our community.

**LATE**

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 2:55:48 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 the Hawai'i Youth Symphony, I also strongly support H.B. 1860, 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.

**LATE**

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 3:28:51 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>
Emanuel Perlman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a professional recording artist, composer, and orchestral vocalist who has concertized internationally and performed with ensembles including the English Chamber Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, I write in strong support of SB2603/HB1860 designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. The HSO serves an indispensable cultural and educational function, and this designation appropriately acknowledges its role as a statewide institutional asset. I would, however, recommend that the Legislature incorporate a mandatory financial stability assessment within two years of enactment, establishing clear benchmarks for fiscal soundness, organizational governance, and long-term sustainability. Such a provision would safeguard the state's investment, reinforce public accountability, and ensure the orchestra can fulfill its designation with the institutional resilience it demands.

**LATE**

## Testimony in Support of HB1860 HD2

*From Christine Kurashige*

---

Aloha,

My name is Christine Kurashige, and I have been a proud supporter of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and its extraordinary musicians for many years. I am writing in strong support of HB1860 HD2 to designate the HSO as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i.

The Orchestra is a cultural treasure that brings world-class music to our islands and reflects the unique spirit of Hawai'i. Its musicians enrich our community not only through exceptional performances but also through their commitment to education, inspiring students across the state and nurturing future generations of artists.

Recognizing the HSO as our State Symphony affirms Hawai'i's dedication to the arts and honors an institution that has served our community with excellence for over a century. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1860 HD2.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**LATE**

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:28:59 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:

HSO is reaching out to the community including for the first time, a collab with Manoa Valley Theatre. It was the first time that I saw representation by the HI State Library offering literary references associated with the music.

**LATE**

**HB-1860-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:36:14 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>
Terrina Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB1860. Having an official State of HI Symphony Orchestra would provide an important cultural anchor and instill and fostering local pride and social cohesion. It acknowledges our State's commitment to music and the arts in the lives of Hawaii residents and the partnerships it engenders. It also facilitates accessibility by all segments of our community to music. The HSO is a vital artistic institution that enriches our communities through free and accessible performances, educational partnerships, and outreach to schools and families.

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. 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.

Our community is so proud of the Royal Hawaiian Band with a royal legacy. Let's include the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra among the legacies our state will gift to our community.

Mahalo.