



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

H.B. NO. 1860, RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS

**DATE:** Friday, February 6, 2026

**TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 309

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Ian Robertson, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Kapela and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments regarding this bill.

The stated purposes of this bill are to (1) designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) the "Hawaii State Symphony Orchestra"; (2) exempt the HSO from the qualifying standards in chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS); (3) establish reporting requirements for the HSO on its use of state funds; and (4) appropriate general revenues to the HSO for its operating costs for fiscal year 2026-2027.

**A Statement Declaring the Public Purpose of the HSO Should be Added to Section 1 of the Bill**

Article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii Constitution provides in part: "No tax shall be levied or appropriation of public money or property made, nor shall the public credit be used, directly or indirectly, except for a public purpose."

Accordingly, to clarify the Legislature's determination that this bill is for a public purpose, we respectfully suggest that an explicit statement of public purpose be inserted in section 1. The Committee may wish to consider the following wording, which was previously used in S.B. No. 441, S.D. 1, H.D. 1:

The legislature finds that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has served and continues to serve a public purpose through free performances at parks and outdoor community centers, education concerts, showcasing young musicians, and performing side-by-side with the Hawaii Youth Symphony, as well as providing free admission for public school faculty, staff, and students to attend

shows through department of education programs. These community program initiatives exemplify the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra's service and dedication to the public. The legislature concludes that exempting appropriations of state general revenues to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra from the requirements of chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, complies with the public purpose requirement of article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii State Constitution.

We further note that the Legislature in Act 382, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 1987, established the Honolulu Symphony Endowment Fund to provide financial support to the Honolulu Symphony. The legislative history of Act 382 stated that the "Honolulu Symphony is a major cultural resource of Hawaii and is deserving of the support provided in this bill." Senate Standing Committee Report No. 802 (1987).

In Act 258, SLH 1988, the name of the Honolulu Symphony Endowment Fund was changed to the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund. Subsequently, in Act 175, SLH 1995, the Legislature, in section 1 of the Act, noted that the purpose of the Act "is to clarify the legislative intent that the income and capital gains of the State of Hawaii endowment fund are to be used for the production of music by an Oahu-based symphony orchestra." We understand that such moneys have been transferred to the HSO "for the production of music by an Oahu-based symphony orchestra."

Also, we note that the legislative history of Act 175 states that "the legislative intent to establish the endowment was to support a live symphonic orchestra for the residents in Hawaii." Conference Committee Report No. 103 (1995). Consequently, we believe that the HSO serves a public purpose.

To facilitate the public's understanding of the Legislature's intent, we respectfully suggest that language be inserted into section 1 of the bill describing the historical support that the HSO has received from the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund, and the public benefits that have accrued from its existence.

**Chapter 42F, HRS, Exemptions for Nonprofits Other than the HSO are Constitutionally Problematic**

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We note that granting chapter 42F, HRS, exemptions to nonprofits other than the HSO is likely to violate article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii Constitution, which provides in part: "No grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." This is because such nonprofits do not share the same

State-established heritage as the HSO. The HSO's unique historical connection to the State gives it a special status that other organizations cannot claim, making exemptions for those other entities constitutionally problematic.

We respectfully ask the Committee to consider our comments.



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February 3, 2026

## **HB1860 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra**

Chair Kapela, Jeanne  
Vice Chair Kong, Sam Satoru  
House Committee on Culture Members and Arts

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Committee Members,

My name is **Paul Kosasa**, and I am the **President and Chief Executive Officer of ABC Stores**, a locally owned business that has served Hawai‘i’s communities for more than seven decades. In addition, I am currently serving as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Honolulu Symphony for 15 years. I write to express **strong support for HB1764**, relating to the Music Accessibility Pilot Program.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is a vital cultural institution that enriches our state by providing world-class music, educational programming, and community engagement opportunities. Its presence enhances Hawai‘i’s quality of life, supports arts education, and contributes meaningfully to the cultural vibrancy that benefits both residents and visitors alike.

As a business deeply rooted in Hawai‘i, ABC Stores recognizes the important role that the arts play in strengthening our communities and supporting a well-rounded economy. Institutions such as the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra help attract talent, inspire creativity, and reinforce Hawai‘i’s reputation as a place where culture and community are valued.

HB1860 supports the continued sustainability and success of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra and reflects the Legislature’s commitment to preserving and promoting the arts in our state. We believe this measure will help ensure that future generations can continue to experience the educational and cultural benefits the Symphony provides.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of HB1860. We respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo,

**Paul Kosasa**

President & CEO  
**ABC Stores**



HAWAI'I  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

DANE LAM | MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i  
Regular Session of 2026  
House Committee on Culture and Arts  
Testimony by Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra  
February 6, 2026

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

**Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, 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**, which would designate HSO 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 a proven contributor to mental and physical health, childhood development, and community well-being. HSO is proud to serve as a cultural and educational resource for Hawai'i.

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

**1. HSO Provides Significant Public Service**

HSO delivers meaningful public service through cultural, educational, and artistic programming, including:

- 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 young talent competition
- Side-by-side projects with Hawai'i Youth Symphony
- A Masterworks Series bringing 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 of Pacific-region works by living composers
  - Uniting the state's most important arts organizations under one umbrella in our groundbreaking Beethoven Festival and this year's Sounds of Shakespeare Festival
  - Employment of top professional musicians who also serve as educators of our keiki
  - 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**

Founded in 1902, HSO (formerly the Honolulu Symphony) is one of the oldest orchestras west of the Rockies. It has survived world wars, the Great Depression, and major economic hardships — demonstrating more than a century of commitment to Hawai'i's communities.

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## **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.

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

HSO partners with local and global artists to celebrate Hawai'i's heritage through diverse programming—from classical masterworks to Hawaiian collaborations—enriching life for residents and visitors alike.

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## **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.

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## **In Summary**

State designation affirms HSO's 125-year legacy and recognizes its statewide public service, with 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

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

We urge you to **pass HB1860** and help make symphonic music a lasting and meaningful part of life for all Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dane Lam". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dane Lam  
Music and Artistic Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Iwano". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Amy Iwano  
President and CEO



2 February 2026

*Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1860 – Relating to the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra*

**Dear Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in strong support of HB 1860**, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This recognition affirms the role symphony orchestras can play as models for **positive community change**; not only through outreach and education, but through artistic excellence itself.

Music has value **for its own sake**. The high artistic standards upheld by HSO's professional musicians, its President/CEO, Music Director, and staff matter deeply. I think it important to note that artistic excellence is not incidental to community engagement, but rather, it is the engine that drives it! When performances are compelling, thoughtful, and musically rigorous, audiences show up. If the artistic product were poor, no amount of outreach alone would sustain public interest or trust. We can't take for granted the HSO's artistic excellence, or the inspiration they bring to our keiki and communities.

In addition, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Orchestras are not merely presentational, but are now **participatory** institutions that invite audiences and partners to shape programming that reflects shared values and local priorities.

**The HSO exemplifies the balance between artistic integrity and civic purpose.** Recent projects such as *Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds*, followed by *Hawai'i Forests* and *Hawai'i Seas*, demonstrated how high-level musicianship paired with place-based storytelling can galvanize extraordinary collaboration. Similarly, **Side-by-Side concerts with Hawai'i Youth Symphony and the Pacific Music Institute** show how professional excellence provides the fuel that allows young musicians and community partners to rise to the occasion. Each time the HSO undertakes a major educational or collaborative endeavor, the community responds wholeheartedly, something not every professional orchestra achieves.

As this designation moves forward, I respectfully encourage the continued prioritization of the HSO's **educational programs for youth and families**, which are the lifeblood of its community connectivity and a natural extension of its artistic mission.

Finally, Hawai'i is fortunate to have a rich ecosystem of collegiate, community, regional, and youth orchestras across the islands. As HB 1860 elevates the HSO, I hope it also creates space to acknowledge and celebrate the broader orchestral landscape—strengthening the stature and impact of *all* symphony orchestras statewide.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Wong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" and last name "Wong" clearly legible.

Randy Wong  
President & CEO, Hawai'i Youth Symphony  
Musician, Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra



February 3, 2026

RE: HB 1860

To whom it may concern:

I was lucky enough to join the Honolulu Symphony in 1968 as a junior in high school. Maestro Robert La Marchina offered me and 2 other high school friends an opportunity to play as members of the Honolulu Symphony while still in high school. We have all continued in music, taking time to complete degrees in music and have returned to Honolulu to resume performing with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra while sharing our accrued knowledge with young students.

As the owner of the Masaki School of Music, many of our 600+ students attend concerts by the Hawaii Symphony and share with me their enthusiasm following each concert, be it classical, a showcase of Hawaiian artists, educational, community based, contemporary featuring video game music or soundtracks from movies. What the Hawaii Symphony does for our community is not duplicated by any other organization in our State. Our students are blessed with high level instruction from masterful musicians of the Hawaii Symphony who have devoted their lives to music and remain steadfast even as they struggle to make ends meet.

My life has been blessed with music and the Honolulu and Hawaii Symphony Orchestras have always been a part of my life. My mother was Ellen Masaki, a piano teacher who devoted her life to music and to her students. She knew the importance of having a professional orchestra in Hawaii and regularly held fundraisers for the orchestra with her students, many of whom had the privilege of performing with the Honolulu Symphony. The orchestra sets high standards and its influence can be heard in our young musicians, many of whom are members of the Hawaii Youth Symphony. You cannot have one without the other and, with the passage of this Bill, the Hawaii Symphony will have additional resources at its disposal to stabilize and grow this truly great orchestra for the people of Hawaii.

Designating the Hawaii Symphony as the State Orchestra of Hawaii is a way to share this gem of the Pacific with our neighboring islands with hopes that they will also want to nurture and share in the growth of this magnificent musical entity that has the power to inspire, educate and cultivate high artistic values within our communities. Children who have been touched by the magic of music usually stay the course and find satisfaction as they develop their technical skills and musical aptitude.

The musicians of the Hawaii Symphony are highly trained and are an invaluable asset for our community. Our symphony musicians teach hundreds of Hawaii's youth and encourage them to join their school orchestras and the Hawaii Youth Symphony. Students who do well in music usually do well in school and are sought after by institutions of higher education. It is a win-win situation.

Performing in a professional orchestra is very demanding, filled with challenges and high expectations. There is very little time to rehearse and put together polished performances week after week. Fortunately, we have found a great leader in Maestro Dane Lam. In the short time he has been onboard he has energized and whipped the orchestra into an ensemble with a powerful, unified voice skilled at delivering the music of the great and familiar composers while also welcoming compositions of living composers. He fully embraces our local artists and traditions and showcases them regularly performing with the Hawaii Symphony. Not only is Dane Lam a visionary who can plan for an exciting and innovative future for our orchestra but he has successfully found a bridge to our audiences through his sincere down-to-earth demeanor. He is a keeper!

This is an exciting time for the Hawaii Symphony and your support will help us retain our musicians and our new Maestro Dane Lam.

Thank you for considering the passage of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Masaki  
Masaki School of Music, owner/president  
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, cellist



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**IN SUPPORT OF HB1860 — Relating to the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra  
Submitted by: Avalon Group**

Aloha Committee Members,

Avalon Group submits this written testimony in strong support of HB1860, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and provides essential operating funding.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has enriched Hawai'i's cultural and educational landscape for more than a century. As noted in the bill, the orchestra has provided significant public service and meaningful artistic contributions since its founding in 1900, promoting both international excellence and local talent.

HB1860 recognizes that the Symphony delivers substantial public value and creates a sustainable mechanism for supporting its operations without compromising its artistic autonomy. The bill ensures that the State may contribute to HSO's general operating costs—up to \$500,000 in FY26–27—for mission-critical functions such as operations, maintenance, community outreach, and educational programming.

Avalon Group is particularly supportive of the bill's focus on educational access, including opportunities for public school students, faculty, and staff to attend performances free of charge. This investment directly aligns with our longstanding commitment to strengthening Hawai'i communities and expanding opportunities for our youth.

Designating HSO as the official State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is not only appropriate given its historic role, but also vital for ensuring its long-term stability and continued service to the people of Hawai'i.

For these reasons, Avalon Group respectfully urges the Legislature to pass HB1860.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

McKinley Eads

On behalf of Avalon Group



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO  
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII  
FEBRUARY 4, 2026

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 1860 – RELATING TO HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee:  
My name is Dave Erdman, and I am the Interim President and CEO of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i (RMH), a statewide nonprofit trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, and allied businesses across the islands.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully submits testimony in **support of HB 1860**, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the Official State Symphony.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a long-standing cultural institution that contributes meaningfully to Hawai'i's quality of life, creative economy, and community identity. Formal recognition as the Official State Symphony appropriately acknowledges the orchestra's role in enriching our cultural landscape, supporting music education, and enhancing Hawai'i's national and international reputation as a place that values the arts.

From a retail and business perspective, cultural institutions such as the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra generate positive economic spillover effects. Performances and related events draw residents and visitors into urban centers as well as across local communities in the islands, support nearby restaurants and retailers, and contribute to evening and weekend activity that benefits local businesses, including members of Retail Merchants of Hawaii.

Many of our members organizations of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii are important supporters of music and the creative arts A vibrant arts sector also strengthens the overall visitor experience and reinforces Hawai'i's brand as a world-class destination. The formal recognition of the Official State Symphony will enhance attendance by visitors which supports our Hawaii brand image and reputation in the global visitor industry will support driving the type of visitors Hawaii would like to welcome.

Many other states formally recognize an official state symphony as an important cultural and economic asset. HB 1860 aligns Hawai'i with those states while reinforcing our commitment to arts, culture, and creative industries that support jobs, education, and community well-being.

For these reasons, Retail Merchants of Hawai'i **supports HB 1860** and respectfully urges the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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



**HAWAII**  
STATE FOUNDATION on  
CULTURE and the ARTS

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

**Before the  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026 Conference Room 309 at 9:30AM**

**HOUSE BILL 1860  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Dear Chair Kapela 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 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.



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Representative Jeanne Kapela, Chair  
Representative Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair  
Committee on Culture & Arts

RE: **HB 1860 - Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra – In Support**  
Friday, February 6, 2026; 9:30 AM  
Conference room 309

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong 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**, 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 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**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Peter Dames  
President & CEO

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:02:29 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee,

As a constituent of House District 1, I support this measure.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:42:00 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Autumn Woods	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing 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 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 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**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:59:47 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

**Testimony in Strong Support of SB2603**

*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 SB2603, 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. 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 SB2603 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.

The bill’s requirement for annual reporting and accountability ensures that public funds are used transparently and that benefits remain centered on schools, libraries, and underserved neighborhoods.

Recognizing the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as our State Symphony affirms that the arts are essential public infrastructure, as necessary to our collective health as parks, libraries, and schools. I respectfully urge you to pass SB2603 so that music, culture, and environmental awareness may continue to reach keiki and communities across our islands.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Christopher LaDue

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:19:02 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Winston R Welch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

This bill has my strong support.

Please pass HB1860.

Aloha, Winston Welch

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:50:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:44:56 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, giving it the recognition it deserves, and helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Lorna Holmes

Mo'ili'ili 96826

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:45:26 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin Hadfeld	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Continuing to support Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is paramount for our community. This support helps to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our our keiki for generations to come. As a parent of four, exposing my keiki to music helps them learn about culture, expose them to unique ideas and experiences and instills a love of the arts in their young hearts and minds. It would be a shame to lose such a valuable piece of our history and community. Please consider supporting this bill as a way to continue to invest in our future.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:45:58 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregory C. Wrenn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1860 designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State Orchestra of Hawai'i. I am a professional violinist, holding a Master of Music degree from the Yale University School of Music. I have had the privilege of performing with symphony orchestras in the United States and Europe, but my greatest honor was being a member of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, my hometown orchestra, for 21 years. Having retired from the orchestra prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, I am now an avid supporter of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and other arts organizations. As an expert in the field of music, I can say unequivocally that the high artistic level of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra rivals the top orchestras in this country and abroad. The State of Hawai'i deserves recognition among the rest of the country, and world, of having its very own designated orchestra of such high calibre. In addition to the intangible benefits that music and the arts bring to improving the quality of our lives and community, music and the arts are also strong economic drivers. Having a State designated orchestra will have a positive quantifiable effect on our economy, at a time when we need it the most. Mahalo for your consideration.

Gregory C. Wrenn

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:49:54 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Shewmaker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. We need the Hawaii's Symphony Orchestra to be designated as the state Orchestra for the state of Hawaii. Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:50:06 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

**Testimony for HB1860**

Hearing: Friday, February 6, 2026 9:30 p.m.

Subject: In Strong Support of HB1850 - Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the Official State Symphony

Dear Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in strong support of HB1860, a bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state symphony of Hawai'i. I write today as a lifelong resident, concerned constituent and music educator for the past 34 years who recognizes the vital role that a world-class symphony plays in the cultural, educational, and economic life of our island 'ohana.

**The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra: A Cultural and Economic Asset**

Founded as the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra in 1900, then rebranded as the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra in 2011, the HSO is Hawaii's only professional orchestra and a cornerstone of our performing arts community. Beyond presenting concerts, the HSO offers artistic leadership, outreach, and educational programs that engage audiences of all ages and backgrounds. As documented by multiple economic impact studies, each dollar invested in symphonic music generates a multiplier effect in the community—supporting jobs, local businesses, and tourism while enhancing quality of life. Approximately 50+ direct jobs plus more than 100 contract workers are supported annually through HSO operations, contributing an estimated \$4 million in total economic impact, with additional earnings when families dine, shop, and stay after performances.

In Hawaii's broader arts and cultural economy, the sector contributes billions of dollars to the state's GDP and supports nearly 20,000 workers, reflecting how deeply the arts drive community vitality. More than 36 percent of Hawai'i adults attend live music, dance, or theater performances, underscoring public engagement and the desire and strong interest for live arts experiences.

## **Formal Recognition Will Strengthen Sustainability**

Designating HSO as the official state symphony is not merely symbolic. It affirms that symphonic music is an essential public service worthy of legislative support. This recognition:

- Enhances the orchestra's ability to secure partnerships, sponsorships, and future funding to expand free and affordable concerts statewide.
- Bolsters community outreach to underserved areas, including neighbor islands where access to music and the arts is limited.
- Reinforces HSO's role in youth and adult music education, connecting professional musicians with schools and community programs.

The orchestra has a budget derived from ticket sales and donors, yet the financial landscape for arts organizations remains challenging. Legislative support can create stability and expand engagement across all of Hawai'i.

## **Enriching Our Communities for Future Generations**

Symphonic music enriches our cultural fabric, enhances educational outcomes, and nurtures the creative economy. Designating the HSO as the official state symphony recognizes the intrinsic value of the arts and ensures Hawai'i remains a place where world-class music thrives. It signals to residents and visitors alike that Hawai'i values the arts not as an optional luxury, but as an essential expression of our shared humanity for all to experience and possibly pursue. For example and on a personal note, I am recently especially grateful for the opportunity that the HSO gave my former student, Cayne Hiraoka, to be a featured soloist for the Symphony In The Park Nā Hōkū 'Ōpio Young Stars Concert on July 24, 2024 at Kailua District Park. This annual concert is a favorite and very well attended concert for the Windward Community of Oahu.

<https://youtu.be/221O-kZZLHQ?si=HbTUwvE6ZxYO2XTb>

Cayne is currently in his 2nd year at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa majoring in Music Education and is the university's principal student saxophonist.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1860. Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Arnold A. Alconcel

Band Director, James B. Castle High School (1996-2026)

[https://youtu.be/wk\\_-tt1r-dQ?si=kACuY7MPi6y-qTez](https://youtu.be/wk_-tt1r-dQ?si=kACuY7MPi6y-qTez)

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

Former Chairperson Oahu Band Directors Association High School Select Band

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

<https://youtu.be/X4bTEBM3HdI?si=uJFOxgVLT0V1hAx>  
V

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:52:54 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Kessner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) being named as the Hawaii State Orchestra. HSO is one of the pillars of culture in Hawaii and allows our people to hear great symphonic pieces as well as works by contemporary composers. The musicians are superb and have become one beautiful voice under the leadership of Maestro Dane Lam. HSO has world class musicians like Concert Master Ignace Jang and Assistant Concert Master Nelly Kovalev as well as wonderful home grown talent like Oboist Alex Hayashi. Indeed all sections of the orchestra have outstanding musicians who also teach in the community so our youth have great instruction in their chosen instrument. It is fitting and appropriate for HSO to be named as the state orchestra.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:52:59 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathleen Long	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kathleen Long, and I am writing in support of HB1860 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state symphony of Hawaii.

HSO is a vital cultural institution that brings high-quality live music to our communities while supporting local musicians and music education across the state. Through performances and outreach programs, the Symphony helps ensure that residents of all ages have access to the arts.

Designating HSO as the official state symphony is a meaningful way to recognize the important role it already plays in enriching Hawaii's cultural life. This recognition affirms the value of the arts in our state and honors an organization that represents Hawaii with excellence and pride.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony. I respectfully urge you to pass HB1860.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Long

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:00:14 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Arias de Cordoba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Heather Arias de Cordoba, and I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of the designation of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Symphony Orchestra and the appropriation of stable funding to support its continued work.

I previously worked at the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as marketing director and have seen firsthand the extraordinary impact this organization has on our community. This is not simply a performing arts group. It is a cultural anchor, an educational partner, and a gathering place for people across the islands.

The HSO meets people where they are, from free pop-up performances to concerts in the park to accessible community programming that removes barriers and invites everyone to participate. These experiences matter. They create connection, pride, aloha and shared identity in ways few institutions can.

The orchestra also brings world-class guest artists to Hawai‘i, ensuring that local families, students, and seniors have access to the same caliber of artistic excellence found in major cultural centers on the mainland. Without the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, Hawai‘i would be the only state in the nation without access to a professional symphony of this scale and quality.

Beyond the stage, the musicians give back through education and outreach, working with keiki, seniors, and underserved communities. They teach, mentor, and inspire. For many students, their first exposure to live orchestral music happens through these programs. That kind of access can change a child’s life trajectory.

Designating the HSO as the State Symphony and providing consistent funding is not just an investment in the arts. It is an investment in education, community well-being, cultural vitality, and economic activity. A strong arts ecosystem strengthens tourism, supports local jobs and enhances quality of life for residents.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra already serves as the state’s symphony in practice. This measure simply recognizes that reality and ensures it can continue serving our communities for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and consideration and for your continued support of arts and culture across Hawai'i.

Respectfully,  
Heather Arias de Cordoba

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:02:46 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Olivia Busenbark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass bill hb1860. Our symphony is so important to Hawaii. Thank you.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:03:34 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pete Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly supporting this bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, to keep the HSO viable and relevant as they bring symphonic music to serve our community. So many other State Capitols have a symphony orchestra, and the vast majority of their funding comes from private fundraising and ticket sales. We need one too.

Thank You!

Pete M., Aiea

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:04:40 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ricky Takemoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a beautiful part of our community, representing the State of Hawaii in class and culture. Residents and visitors enjoy a wide variety of presentations - many of which we all agree are world class. Whether classical or local, their presentations are a bright reflection on our state and I was surprised to discover that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is not even recognized nor supported by Hawaii. Please show support for an organization that is already positively associated with Hawaii and already an important part of our community through outreach to students and kupuna (like me). Thank you for your thoughtful consideration!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:05:50 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Roger Epstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honolulu Symphony is critical to the mental health of our community. As an attorney in Honolulu for 55 years, I know how important this is.  
please pass this legislation

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:06:18 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Norm Foster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly support HB1860. I have been a member of the Hawaii Symphony, formerly the Honolulu Symphony, for 40 years. We have served the entire state as when I first joined, every season we visited Maui, Kauai and the Big Island with full symphony concerts and educational programs. In 1992 we were a 42 week season major orchestra. At 21 weeks now and under the brilliant direction of Dane Lam, the artistic quality of the orchestra is the best ever in my opinion. The orchestra needs to be recognized and designated as the official orchestra of Hawaii. We are professionals and bring much to the State. This designation would help our fundraising and long term stability. Mahalo for your consideration.**

**Norm**

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:07:58 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HSO is So Fabulous to listen to and to watch too ! Listening to HSO transports me up beyond my present circumstances filling me with Joy and Inspiration ! HSO pours their heart out into whatever music they play ! They Deserve to be the Official State Orchestra ! I am Always Thrilled to attend their performances !

Thank you !

Katherine Kane

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:16:22 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wendy Asato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB 1860 as a person who was born and raised in Honolulu. I grew up attending the symphony, and over the years I have watched it grow into a truly world-class orchestra under the leadership of Maestro Dane Lam.

Not only does the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra hold its own among major orchestras, it is strong enough to attract and support world-renowned guest artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, and Joshua Bell. We are incredibly fortunate to have our own symphony to enrich the lives of Hawai'i's citizens and our keiki. This is a cultural legacy that must be passed on—not allowed to wither away.

Classical music is a form of wholesome, meaningful entertainment, and it is not just for wealthy elites. It fulfills our lives in countless ways. Symphony concerts teach us history, bring composers to life as real people, and provide music that soothes the soul and calms the heart. This music makes people happy—and happy people are more productive, cooperative citizens who contribute positively to society.

We cannot let this precious resource slip through our fingers. Supporting HB 1860 is an investment in the cultural, emotional, and educational well-being of Hawai'i and its people.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:17:35 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jodi Javonillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I a writing in support of HB1860 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. Please protect the world-class music they bring to our islands which is critical to our keiki's learning and enjoyment! Mahalo!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:28:36 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Samuel Halm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has positively impacted our community by providing an affordable entertainment alternative that helps to improve mental and physical health, fosters social cohesion, drives economic growth, and promotes empathy. Active engagement in the arts reduces anxiety, depression, and stress while fostering emotional resilience and enhancing the quality of our lives. The world is experiencing complicated changes that are impacting daily lives in negative ways and have resulted in people being less caring, more apathetic towards one another. This is the antithesis of Aloha. However, my personal experience has revealed that active public engagement in orchestral symphony performances has the effect of reducing anxiety, depression, and stress while fostering emotional resilience. We cannot expect to collectively benefit from this if the symphony orchestra ceases to exist. If not for any other reason, we must do everything possible to support this symphony to help perpetuate it and the Aloha spirit in our great State of Hawaii. Please do the right thing and designate the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state symphony** to help ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to thrive in our islands, enriching our community for generations to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:38:20 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kesha Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill to keep make **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra the official state symphony**, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. we need to make sure Hawaii maintains a Symphony orchestra group.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:38:39 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Schoocraft	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are season members of HSO and have watched the orchestra improve to a world class symphony under Dane Lam. All Hawaii should be proud.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:58:13 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brenner Danielson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and other members of the committee.

I urge you not to advance this bill, or to amend it by removing the appropriation of funds. I am a resident who enjoys the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and has attended many of their performances.

However, the introducer of this bill Rep. Quinlan, along with Gov. Green have repeatedly claimed the state is facing large funding shortfalls, and have proposed new measures to raise taxes.

As such it would be irresponsible to commit funding to the HSO at a time when the state is facing shortfalls and raising taxes.

Mahalo for you time.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:07:30 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
WAYNE K HIGASHI	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:11:26 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natasha Shanahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to support legislation to make the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. I have been attending their concerts since I was a child and now are bringing my children. They are a foundation of community and art within Hawaii. I have enjoyed every orchestra, musical and opera concert I have gone to and enjoy the new direction they have gone in incorporating orchestra music with film and children's performances. They are a treasure!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:11:37 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Matsuura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because the Hawaii Symphony has demonstrated excellent musicianship which it takes to as many communities in our state as possible. The Hawaii symphony represents our state with concert repertoire, musicians and education that reaches all ages. It represents the highest level of musicianship in our state.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:15:22 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lilly Schloeder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Lilly Schloeder and I am submitting testimony in support of HB1860 to make Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra the state symphony. I have lived on O'ahu for six years now, and the Hawai'i Symphony has molded me as a young adult and business professional. I was hired as their Marketing Coordinator back in 2021. Immediately, I was welcomed into the warmest, friendliest group of staff. Over the next three years, I helped shape their brand and helped sell out concerts. I wouldn't be the business person I am today without the opportunity the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra gave me as an somewhat inexperienced young woman with a passion for classical music. I witnessed hundreds of concerts that were heard by Hawai'i people of all backgrounds, ages, and socio-economic statuses. This is an extremely critical nonprofit organization that deserves the title of state symphony. Mahalo.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:25:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Castro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) has had a significant impact on our family, especially our two daughters, who graduated from public school, and then earned their undergraduate degrees in music from UHM before earning their masters degrees. Currently, Naomi is the choral director for the Eugene (OR) Opera Theatre, Eugene Symphony Chorus, and Cottage Grove Theatre. Karyn is program developer with Chorus America, based in Washington, D.C,

The quality of professional level and the yearslong friendship with many of the HSO musicians have definitely left their mark on our family. Music that HSO provides to Hawai'i Nei and the world is just an indication of the global impact the whole organization has had.

A hui hou, Jimmy Castro

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:39:45 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carlynn M Wolfe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are an ARTS state and need to show it.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:45:51 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon McMonagle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB1860. I have been a season ticket holder for over ten years and have greatly appreciated these events especially as Hawaiian and Pacific talent has been showcased in addition to the standard repertoire.

Our symphony is a matter of pride and accomplishment. Please support its continued success.

Shannon McMonagle

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:48:35 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Renee Foster	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This truly would benefit the state of Hawaii and its citizens. To have an orchestra that not only represents the state, but promotes the culture and all that is Hawaii.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:50:36 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tony Santini	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Hawai'i Legislature,

I fully support this bill. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is an important asset to the state of Hawai'i and our local community.

Mahalo,

Tony Santini

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:35:47 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lindsey Heathcock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill in the hope of providing more support to our symphony so more can enjoy.

Lindsey Heathcock

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:38:15 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephanie Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a kama'aina creative professional working here in the islands. I am in strong support of HB1860. The hawaii symphony is an economic driver for musicians. it brings world class musicians to hawaii and this talent in turn teaches and inspires the next generation. Who are we without our diversity? The creativity of the symphony musicians ripple out into our community in ways beyond our ability to quantify. mahalo for your support of HB1860

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:00:45 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcelo Hanza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB1860, which formally designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official Symphony Orchestra of the State of Hawai‘i.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra has long been a cultural treasure, enriching our communities with world-class performances, exceptional educational programming, and a steadfast commitment to preserving and celebrating Hawai‘i’s diverse artistic heritage. As one of the oldest orchestras in the nation, the HSO serves as a cornerstone of our islands’ cultural identity—bringing people together across generations, islands, and backgrounds.

Designating the HSO as the State Symphony Orchestra is both a meaningful acknowledgment of its historic contributions and an investment in Hawai‘i’s cultural future. This designation would:

- **Affirm Hawai‘i’s commitment to the arts**, recognizing the essential role that music and cultural programming play in the well-being and vibrancy of our communities.
- **Support educational outreach**, enabling the HSO to continue inspiring thousands of keiki through programs that cultivate creativity, discipline, and cultural connection.
- **Strengthen Hawai‘i’s profile nationally and internationally**, showcasing our state’s rich artistic landscape and the talent of our local and global musicians who call the HSO home.

The HSO’s contributions extend far beyond the concert hall. Its musicians and staff partner with schools, collaborate with community organizations, uplift local composers and performers, and help ensure that art—in its most powerful and resonant form—remains accessible to all.

For these reasons, I respectfully and enthusiastically urge the committee to pass HB1860.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued support of arts and culture in Hawai‘i.

Marcelo Hanza



**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:04:10 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meghan Barrett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB1860  
Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra**

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

I am writing in strong and heartfelt support of **HB1860**, designating the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony.

Both of my parents devoted their lives to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra. My mother has been a member since the early 1970s and remains an active professional musician to this day. My father was a member for over forty years and passed away from cancer while still performing with the Symphony. I quite literally grew up alongside this organization, witnessing both its extraordinary artistic contributions and the constant struggle for stability and survival.

Despite those struggles, my parents had incredible, meaningful careers with the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra—careers rooted in service, excellence, and dedication to this community. The Symphony was not just their workplace; it was a living institution that shaped our family, our values, and our sense of purpose.

Because of my parents’ involvement in the Symphony, I grew up immersed in music, discipline, collaboration, and creativity. That foundation profoundly shaped who I became. Today, I am both a veterinarian and a professional musician, and my life’s work uniquely combines those two paths: I provide music as enrichment and therapeutic support for animals in medical, sanctuary, and conservation settings.

Without the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, I would not be the person I am today. I would not be doing the work I do. I would not have the mission, the knowledge, or the skills that now allow me to serve animals, people, and the broader community in meaningful ways. The Symphony did not only create musicians—it created ripple effects that extend far beyond the concert hall, into education, healing, science, and service.

Designating the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony is not merely symbolic. It is an acknowledgment of its cultural, educational, and generational impact, and a commitment to protecting an institution that has shaped countless lives—mine included. It helps

ensure that world-class symphonic music remains accessible to our community and our keiki for generations to come.

I am deeply indebted to the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and profoundly grateful for its continued presence in our state. I passionately support any measure that helps protect, honor, and sustain this vital cultural institution.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Meghan Barrett, DVM

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:15:34 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The HSO is a bright light in our community and promotes the good, true, and the beautiful. The dedication and artistry of the musicians is admirable and inspiring. Please help to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. Aloha!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:35:33 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Kapela, Vice Chair Representative Kong and Members of the Committee on Culture and the Arts.

Please support HB 1860 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I have donated to the HSO for many years, and have been enriched and uplifted by the melodies that the wonderful HSO musicians bring to life. Please help more people in Hawaii to be enriched and uplifted musically by supporting HB 1860.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:52:17 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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 support this bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. I am an avid fan of the symphony as well as the current conductor!

Please support this bill!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:23:36 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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 the passage of HB 1860 designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This will enable its sustainability across all islands statewide going forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1860.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:55:46 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeff Juett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

First time season ticket holder from last year. And it has been a magnificent experience. I'll always be a season ticket holder from now on.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:02:18 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniela Jendly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my deep support for the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra and to share why its continued existence is so vital to our community.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is not only one of the finest orchestras in the Pacific region, it is also the only professional symphony of its kind here. Under the leadership of its new conductor, the orchestra has come alive in a remarkable way. Each performance carries a rare sweetness — music that touches the heart, softens the body, and opens something essential within us.

As someone who lives and works in Hawai‘i, I can say firsthand how meaningful these concerts are. The music offers more than entertainment; it offers presence, connection, and healing. In times when many people feel overwhelmed, disconnected, or exhausted by the pace of modern life, sitting in a concert hall and listening to these musicians is a reminder of what it means to be human — to feel, to listen, to breathe together.

It is painful to know that this orchestra has been struggling for years, despite the extraordinary talent, dedication, and artistry of its musicians. These are artists who have devoted their lives to their craft and who give so generously to our community through their music.

I sincerely wish more people would experience the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, and I believe that with stronger support and visibility, many more would. Cultural institutions like this do not survive on ticket sales alone — they survive because a community and its leaders recognize their long-term value.

Supporting the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is an investment in the cultural, emotional, and spiritual health of our islands. It is an investment in beauty, discipline, collaboration, and the quiet but powerful way music opens hearts.

I respectfully urge you to support the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra so that it may continue to inspire, uplift, and serve our community for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Daniela Jendly

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:20:47 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Poranee Sponsel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has been doing a great job with support of community to highlight the unique cultural values of the State of Hawaii. At this economic trouble time, many doners have to stop their donations.

It is high time for the State of Hawaii to finacially support the HSO as it is one of the State cultural prides and magnet for tourism. Thank you.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:11:30 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Connie Conover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1860. To support the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:54:43 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Sun Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i wholeheartedly support HSO's petition to be designated State of Hawai`i Symphony Orchestra. In my mind, it already is functioning in this capacity. HSO, under its current leadership and team members, has delivered an exceptional caliber of cultural offerings - a quality that makes us in Hawai`i beam with pride! HSO demonstrates both breadth and depth. The organization's outreach into community, collaborations with other local cultural organizations, and its focus on educating our youth simply raises the tide for everyone. This is community leadership!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:16:56 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joanne Amberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support the Hawai'i symphony Orchestra. The arts and music are vital to the health and well being of our community.

Mahalo,

Joanne Amberg

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:08:24 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gabrielle Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Gabrielle Allen and I am writing in strong support of HB1860, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony of Hawai'i. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has served Hawaii deeply, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike while serving as a vital cultural resource. Designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony affirms Hawai'i's commitment to arts education, cultural continuity, and community access to high-quality artistic experiences for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:40:12 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosemary Adam-Terem	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I believe Hawaii has and needs an excellent symphony orchestra. Not only does HSO bring live classical and contemporary music to audiences, it also serves the community with music education. It provides employment opportunities for Hawaii musicians who would otherwise have to take their knowledge and talents away from our state.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:02:23 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Margaret ANN Renick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state orchestra.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:08:57 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mariko Dennis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony of Hawai'i. This organization matters deeply to the city of Honolulu, the island of O'ahu, and the state of Hawai'i as a whole. With Honolulu serving as the state's capital, it only make sense for the city's largest and most cherished music organization to represent Hawai'i as a whole. Thank you for your consideration!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:33:46 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
chunmay chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2/4/26

I fully support the designation of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state orchestra. For Hawaii, we are most fortunate to have a group of dedicated and passionate Olympic musicians to play for us and be blessed with supporters beyond politics. Music brings peace.

Please vote yes to this bill.

thank you Chunmay Chang

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:02:18 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gillian Dunn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having a symphony orchestra is a privilege for any community. A live full orchestra is a unique musical and cultural experience. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is the most innovative orchestra I've ever experienced. They play classical music, of course, but also bring in Pacific and Asian influences. I love how you would be able to figure out where this orchestra is homed just by looking at their programs. They really strive for outreach both geographically and generationally. Please support HSO as the official state symphony to help ensure this amazing orchestra brings joy and innovation for years to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:03:56 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha -

I am writing in strong support of HB1860 in support of designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony.

I am a long-time teaching within the Hawaii State School System, testifying as an individual. I am also a long-time supporter of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is the state's only full-time professional orchestra and has served the people of Hawai'i for decades. Its musicians live, work, and raise families here, contributing not only to our artistic life but also to our local economy and community well-being.

HSO's impact extends far beyond the concert hall. Through statewide education programs, school partnerships, and community performances, the orchestra reaches keiki, kūpuna, and underserved communities across O'ahu and neighbor islands. These efforts nurture creativity, discipline, and cultural appreciation—values that align deeply with Hawai'i's commitment to education and lifelong learning.

The Honolulu Symphony is a treasure. I respectfully urge you to support this measure and formally recognize the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony of Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathryn Braun, Punchbowl

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:13:44 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yinphan Tsang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this Bill HB 1860. We are so fortunate to have Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) here in Hawaii and continuously bring world-class concert and amazing music performance and experience. As a Hawaii resident and citizen, I have enjoyed the opportunities and privilege to have HSO with us. I fully support **to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony**, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

Please support and pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
Yinphan Tsang

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:15:24 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB1860, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony of Hawai'i.

The Symphony plays an essential role in enriching our community through world-class music, education, and cultural connection, especially for our keiki. Official recognition would help ensure its long-term stability and continued positive impact across the islands.

Please support HB1860 and invest in the cultural future of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my testimony.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:23:33 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noreen Mulliken	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Please pass this bill designating the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony**, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:38:43 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kendrick Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Committee Members:

I write in my personal capacity to express support for HB 1860 to designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra.

Over the past few years, I've attended a number of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra ("HSO") concerts at Hawai‘i Theatre and always been impressed by the high-quality performances of our local musicians. I share multi-generational familial ties to the Fort Street Mall and Chinatown business district and currently serve as a Trustee of the United Chinese Society of Hawai‘i. HSO's presence at Hawai‘i Theatre brings our community together and in turn supports many of our small businesses (e.g., restaurants and retailers) in Fort Street Mall and Chinatown. As a result, HSO is an economic driver that aligns with the current vision to revitalize business and community opportunities in the urban Honolulu District. As a result, State investment in the HSO will yield broader economic benefits for many of our small businesses.

I kindly urge that the committee advance HB 1860 to the next committee.

Best,  
Kendrick S. Chang

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:40:20 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charles Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a state, Hawaii should support the arts. We have a world-class symphony that's barely surviving on less than a shoestring budget. This forum is not to debate whether the symphony orchestra is important; it is. The question is whether we should adopt our orchestra as the official orchestra of the State of Hawaii and give it the financial support it needs to survive. Right now our musicians cannot make a living playing in the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. It's not even their main job.

I heard once several years ago that our UH football coach was the highest paid state employee. How can we pay a college football coach, one person, half a million dollars a year and not support our symphony? That doesn't make sense to me.

I value our symphony and want to see it flourish for many years to come. It provides a valuable service to our community that we cannot afford to lose.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:40:38 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glenn Tango	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official orchestra of state of Hawaii. The orchestra is first class and very good.

Jon Magnussen  
Resident of 'Aiea, HI

Representative Jeanne Kapela  
Chair, Committee on Culture & Arts  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 210  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 4, 2026

**RE: HB1860–Support for Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) Designation as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra**

Dear Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and members of the Committee on Culture & Arts:

I am writing in regards to HB1860, to express my strong support for the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) and to advocate for its designation as the "State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra" with consistent, annual fiscal support from the State of Hawai'i for their impactful music education services on O'ahu and across our neighbor islands.

As a vital community asset, the HSO **fills critical gaps in public education**, particularly in underserved areas such as O'ahu's Leeward Coast and the neighbor islands, where access to arts education is sorely limited. I know this firsthand, having grown up on Kaua'i. I also know this as a longtime music educator at UH West O'ahu on the Leeward side of O'ahu, where many of my students, still in their 20s, have never experienced a live orchestral performance – 65+ people collaborating onstage, playing beautiful music. My students always find inspiration from class outings to hear the HSO in the Blaisdell Concert Hall, many for their first time. Consistent state funding for symphony music education services in underserved areas statewide would provide much-needed access to inspiration.

The HSO is also a cultural beacon in our community, expressing who we are as humans, in ways that can **help us better understand and navigate the uncertainties of the future and problems of the present**. Our HSO does this by programming excellent, impactful work of the past, and by working with living artists and composers to bring new work into existence. The new work reflects who we are, here, right now, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Without the HSO, we would be poorer, and our keiki would be less likely to develop skills of collaboration and problem-solving, and a strong work ethic necessary for a successful future.

In the past decade, the HSO has built an excellent model, with a team currently headed by the impactful Music & Artistic Director Dane Lam, President and CEO, Amy Iwano, Composer in Residence Michael Foumai, all supported by a strong Board of Directors chaired with a steady hand by Paul Kosasa (ABC Stores). An investment in the HSO would be a **wise investment into our statewide economy**. With its 50+ direct employees and over 100 contract workers,

the HSO directly contributes to our statewide economy, with **every \$1 invested in the arts often returning \$5-\$7 in economic activity**. (This figure is derived from long-term, large-scale studies on the nonprofit arts and culture sector's economic impact conducted by Americans for the Arts, released in October 2023.)

A robust HSO positively impacts our economy in the following ways:

- **Tourism and Hospitality:** The HSO acts as a premier cultural attraction, enhancing the visitor experience and offering an attractive and sophisticated alternative to typical tourist activities. The HSO helps attract visitors to our islands seeking culture, bringing revenue into the state, and especially Waikiki and the Honolulu area.
- **Transportation and Local Business:** Concert nights at the Blaisdell or Hawaii Theatre drive increased traffic for transportation services (taxis, rideshares, parking) and nearby restaurants, boosting local commerce. Approximately 50% of attendees dine or shop before or after HSO performances, directly benefiting downtown Honolulu and surrounding local businesses.
- **Cultural Identity and Innovation:** The HSO has quietly been creating a new body of Hawai'i-centered symphonic works to help audiences connect with our unique cultural heritage. This includes celebrating the history and incredible knowledge of our indigenous ancestors (*mai nā kūpuna mai*), alongside the stories of today, with works by local composers Michael Foumai, Herb Mahelona, Takuma Itoh, Byron Yasui, Takeo Kudo, Tom Osborne, Don Womack, and others, myself included. The HSO also blends traditional symphonic music with local culture, such as the HapaSymphony series, which features the best local artists and *mele* (songs) in *ʻōlelo Hawai'i* (Hawaiian language), bringing a unique, "only-in-Hawaii" experience to residents and visitors alike.
- **Education and Workforce Development:** To make a living, the musicians of the HSO not only work for the HSO; they also teach our island children. Without the HSO to anchor excellent musicians in our state, many of them would leave our community, find another orchestra, and leave a hole in our economy (teaching dollars are spent right back into our state economy.) Consistent funding for our HSO will help maintain a viable, stable cadre of teachers in our islands, and will allow an expansion of the HSO's educational programs, fostering creativity and discipline in our youth, while supporting education statewide.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to voice my support. I humbly and strongly urge you to designate the HSO as the "State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra", and to support annual state funding for the HSO to continue these vital services.

Mahalo nui,

Jon Magnussen  
Resident of 'Aiea

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:53:19 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:00:19 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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, fully support HB1860, 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**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:02:27 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Courtney Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:12:00 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shadia Habbal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HSO, the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a unique symphony, not only across the US, but worldwide. As a resident of Honolulu , and a subscriber since 2005, I can attest to having lived in different parts of the world, and listened to world-class orchestras, such as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmony. HSO is not only in that league, but it offers far more to the community than any of these symphonies. It is an incredible and superior asset to Hawaii, offering all ages, most importantly, the younger generation, unique experiences in the appreciation of music from across the centuries. They also make a concerted effort to promote local composers. Furthermore, they reach out to communities across the Pacific. The performances are rivetting and first rate. I have never enjoyed performances as much as from HSO. I most strongly support the designation of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. Such a designation will help ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. We are extremely privileged to have such a symphony in our state.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:13:12 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Stanton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A major symphony is vital for Hawaii to foster community, unite generations through music, and provide essential educational opportunities, serving as a pillar for cultural, social, and economic health. The [Hawaii Symphony Orchestra](#) (HSO) and similar organizations enhance quality of life by providing world-class performances, serving as a unique cultural bridge between East and West, and offering accessible, high-quality music education.

- **Cultural and Social Importance:** As a "pillar for the arts," the orchestra provides a communal space that bridges generations and brings together a diverse audience.
- **Unique Local Identity:** Founded in 1900, the HSO is the oldest orchestra west of the Rocky Mountains, making it a critical part of the state's historical and cultural identity.
- **Education and Youth Development:** Organizations like the Hawaii Youth Symphony use music to foster community, offering programs that reach schools across the islands and ensuring music education is accessible.
- **Economic and Artistic Impact:** A local, professional orchestra retains musical talent, reducing the need for a commuting-orchestra model due to Hawaii's isolation.
- **Environmental Education:** Specialized programming, such as the *Symphony of the Hawaiian Forests* and *Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds*, educates students on local environmental issues through music and art.
- **Community Connection:** The orchestra serves as a public service, providing, for instance, free concerts and educational opportunities to the community.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:23:14 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sandy Chen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Sandy Chen, a supporter of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I strongly support and respectfully urge the committee to pass and advance House Bill 1860. I believe HSO plays an important role in the community.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:26:59 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alma M. Nagao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am humbly asking for your support of HB1860 designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State Orchestra of Hawaii. I realize that at this time of economic uncertainty there are many needs.

Our community needs the Symphony Orchestra which has provided family concerts, brought in famous musicians, introduced the students to playing with the Symphony and endless other avenues.

Our grandson was among the many inspired by the Symphony. He received a Bachelor's and Master's degree in violin performance. Today he not only plays with the Symphony but teaches orchestra in the classroom.

Please support HB1860 and have Hawaii be the first to have the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra designated as the State Orchestra and have it recognized for the contributions to Music and the Arts and inspiring our students to love and preserve the art of music for years to come.

Thank you!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:27:55 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Wilhelm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE:HB1860

Hawaii deserves an official state symphony orchestra and it should be the current Hawaii Symphony. Dane Lam has done a magnificent job as the conductor and music director of the Symphony and attendance at concerts has soared. We frequently bring mainland visitors to concerts and they are impressed with the quality of the programs and the musicianship.

Unfortunately, ticket sales do not cover all the costs of the orchestra and donations from patrons (like myself) cover most of the deficit. Fund raising will be easier if the HSO has the official designation it deserves and the recognition will further enhance HSO's reputation.

Please support HB1860.

REWilhelm-1001 Queen Street, #1700, Honolulu 96814

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:28:05 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ana Trovinger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wholeheartedly support the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra in their mission to deliver exceptional symphonic music to our community and to our keiki. Their programs create invaluable opportunities for family engagement, and I believe it's essential to sustain this cultural treasure for future generations. We must ensure that the magic of live symphonic performances continues to inspire and connect us all.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:40:54 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathleen Bunce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1860, the House companion bill to SB2603, which designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. The HSO is a vital cultural institution that enriches our community, provides music education and inspiration for our keiki, and represents Hawai‘i with world-class artistry. My family has attended many wonderful concerts and performances and will continue to do so in the future. Recognizing the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra in this way helps ensure that symphonic music remains accessible and vibrant for generations to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:41:00 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
George I. Nagao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are avid supporters of our Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and all of its educational programs, outreach initiatives and support of our professional musicians who have worked multiple positions in support of music in our community.

So far much of the support has come from the private sector. Permanently making the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra our state orchestra will insure continued music excellence and Hawaii's reputation for artistic support.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:45:32 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Conybeare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a cultural treasure. Its outstanding musicians provide mazing general audience concerts as well as education for students and children. HSO also brings world class musicians such as Yo Yo Ma to Hawai'i for special events. In addition to classical music HSO features a variety of popular music concerts for all! For these reasons HSO deserves the designation as our official state orchestra! Please support this legislation! Mahalo, Chris Conybeare

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:13:33 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maria Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, sir/ma'am,

I am writing in support of designating Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State Symphony of Hawai'i, not only because they bring me personal joy with their music, but because I believe all people should have the opportunity to enjoy live music.

Music is the language of the soul. If we lose this language, we risk losing much of what makes us who we are. HSO doesn't just perform 1 type of music, they cover the spectrum from classical to present day, including movie scores. This allows them to appeal to all audiences, feeding their souls.

HSO employs a diverse group of professional musicians who are passionate about their craft and about sharing it with the people of Hawai'i. We must protect these prized individuals and the beautiful music they make and share with us all. I encourage you to bestow the designation of State Symphony upon HSO and allow these amazingly talented men & women to continue to feed the souls of our beloved state.

Respectfully,

Maria Liu

Makiki

I strongly support the measure to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. I have been attending the symphony for decades under its various names and conductors. The music through these decades has enriched my life and made me aware of the wider world of music, not only of the Pacific, but also of the United States but also Europe. Being here in the Pacific I feel that we must make every effort to make connections not only in the present in but also in the past. The rich history of music in Europe forms the repertoire of the symphony, but there is also music of Asia and the Pacific. Maestro Lam has expanded the offerings of the Symphony. Also I remember in the 4th grade many decades ago we listened to the Standard Oil concerts through the PA system in Manoa School. This no longer exists. We need to give the young people of Hawaii another avenue to the world. Having the symphony become our official Hawai'i Symphony will give that must more reason to explore. Thank you.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:20:11 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
karen ley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill into law to honor this Hawaii cultural treasure.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:32:38 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edwina Jo Snow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a season ticket holder for the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. It's a miracle that we have a symphony on the remote island of Oahu. The musicians are world class and could perform anywhere. They sacrifice to stay here with the high cost of living. They bring joy to listeners. They give lessons to our children. They accompany the opera and other performances. Please support the symphony.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:41:29 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kolleen Roessig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*I am Kolleen, a supporter of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I strongly support, and respectfully urge the Committee to pass and advance HB1860. I believe that any form of art plays an important role in anyone's life. Your support of this measure will help to serve the community equitably across our islands. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1860.*

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:41:45 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer C McLennan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, I am a big fan of the HSO and attend regularly. I feel the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra should be the official state symphony, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. It's based in our largest city and serves the wider community and attracts amazing talent. Thanks you for your attention to this matter.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:44:43 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John McLennan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, I attend the HSO concerts often and feel they are a necessary fabric of the greater community. It should definitely be designated as the official state symphony!

Thanks,

John

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:45:36 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlie Field	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT HB1860 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. An investment in the arts builds a strong community, and continuing to support HSO grows that community even more.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:45:35 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Nakagawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is important to me because the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra provides an invaluable gift to the state of Hawaii. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra serves our community with world-class music. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra should be designated as the official state symphony.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:00:21 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chad Nakagawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:17:14 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Byron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support **designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony**, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:48:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karen A Valasek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1860 companion to SB2603.

As a retired music Teacher I saw everyday the importance that music is to the health and well being of our community. Having our Sympony designated as our official State Sympony would help to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

Thank you!

Karen Valasek

I am submitting testimony in support of HB1860 with the outcome of designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official Hawaii state symphony.

HSO provides so much more than in-theater concert experiences. The symphony and the HSO musicians are active in serving Hawaii through various musical events (including "free" concerts) as well as outreach efforts to schools, other organizations, and the greater Hawaii community. This is well-known.

My support of the HSO is personal as it is with so many who enjoy and appreciate music and realize that personal health is improved by music. While the type of music each person enjoys and relates to is personal, the HSO understands the need for variety, for encouraging young musicians, hosting artists from around the world, and for meeting the community outside of theater events. This beyond-the-concert-hall energy and focus tells me, in my heart of hearts, that the HSO is truly a symphony worthy of being recognized in its fullest capacity and is worthy of being designated, officially, as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

Mahalo nui.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:41:09 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gretchen Gould	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I hope you will pass this bill to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony**, helping to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

It has been proven that culture, and especially MUSIC, is especially important in people's lives, enriching them and also helping their brains develop. Civilized societies all have symphony orchestras. Hawaii, being alone in the Pacific ocean, MUST have a symphony orchestra!!

Please support this bill on its way to becoming a very important law!!

Gretchen Gould

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:42:28 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Richards Dona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB1860, the House companion bill to SB2603, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony.

As a season ticket holder, I have experienced firsthand the vital role the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra plays in our community. The HSO provides world-class performances that enrich the cultural life of our islands, foster connection across generations, and help make the arts accessible and relevant in Hawai'i. Their work extends beyond the concert hall through education, outreach, and community engagement that benefits residents and visitors alike.

Formal recognition of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra would acknowledge its long-standing contributions to our state and help ensure the continued vitality of symphonic music in Hawai'i for generations to come. I respectfully urge you to support HB1860.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Angela Richards Dona

Honolulu, Hawai'i

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:43:46 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<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,

Please 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

TO: House Committee on Culture, Arts, & International Affairs

FROM: Hye-ryeon Lee

RE: HB1860 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony  
(HEARING DATE: Feb. 6, 9:30 AM)

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

I am writing today to express my strong support for HB1860, which seeks to designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official state orchestra of Hawai‘i.

As someone who truly believe that music and arts play a very important role in lifting human spirits, I believe this designation is a fitting recognition of an institution that serves as the heartbeat of Hawai‘i’s cultural landscape.

The HSO is one of the oldest orchestras in the United States west of the Rocky Mountains. Despite economic challenges and the changing tides of history, it has remained a world-class ensemble, bringing the highest caliber of music to our islands.

The HSO has been working hard to bridge cultures. Through its *Hapa Family Concert Series* and collaborations with local Kumu Hula and musicians, it weaves Western classical traditions with the rich musical heritage of Hawai‘i. It doesn't just play music; it tells our story.

The HSO also serves as a vital educational resource. Through its various education programs, it reaches thousands of keiki every year, inspiring the next generation of local musicians and ensuring that arts education remains accessible to all, regardless of zip code. Further, a vibrant arts scene is essential for a healthy economy. The HSO serves as a major draw for residents and visitors alike, contributing to the professional ecosystem for local performers, educators, and technicians.

By designating the HSO as the State Orchestra, the State of Hawai‘i sends a clear message: the arts are a priority. This title confers the HSO with the prestige needed to attract global talent and secure philanthropic support, ensuring this institution remains sustainable for the next century. The HSO represents the "spirit of Aloha" through every note played. It is time we honor that contribution with this official designation. I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB1860.

Mahalo for your time and for your support of the arts in Hawai‘i.

Sincerely,

Hye-ryeon Lee, resideing at 3094 Kaloaluiki Street, Honolulu, HI 96822

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:34:37 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Monk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Besides the undoubted pleasure and cultural enrichment it provides to those who attend its concerts, the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra serves as an invaluable community resource, both as an institution offering free or inexpensive programs in the community, and as the base of support for the highly skilled musicians who individually instruct the state's keiki who are learning to play their instruments. The HSO attracts artists of international caliber to perform in Hawaii who would not otherwise be seen here. Designation for official support by the State of Hawaii would help to ensure the stability of this precious jewel.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:01:05 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tracy Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of HB1860, which designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, requires annual reporting to the Legislature, and appropriates necessary funds.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is a vital cultural institution that enriches our state through high-quality performances, education programs, and community engagement across Hawai‘i. Formal recognition as the State Symphony Orchestra affirms its role in preserving and advancing the arts while strengthening Hawai‘i’s cultural identity.

Appropriating funds to support the Orchestra is an investment in arts education, workforce development, arts tourism, and the overall quality of life for our residents. HB1860 helps ensure the long-term sustainability of an organization that serves communities statewide and represents Hawai‘i on a national and international level.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration of this important measure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Chan

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:48:07 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elaine Lemons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill in support of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.

I learned to appreciate many forms of music and develop a multitude of valuable listening, public, & performance skills due to growing up with a vibrant symphony that provided opportunities to hear, learn how to listen, engage with professional musicians, and be creatively & professionally inspired for any endeavor or occupation. This orchestra is exceptional, hard-working, engaging, and provides many of the same opportunities to keiki and adults alike. They are a treasure to be supported.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:59:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lucy Goodell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1860 and its companion SB2603 to designate Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, helping to perpetuate its important role in allowing access to diverse forms of music. The islands are greatly enriched by music these musicians provide and these bills will help ensure those benefits for future generations.

Lucy Goodell

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:21:03 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elaina Malm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a treasure for our state and deserves full recognition and support. It is not only a legacy, having served our community for over 100 years,, but a pathway for future musicians and music lovers. It provides something for everyone. Our Symphony supports local Hawaii musicians through its Hapa series, schools through education programs and youth symphony concerts, movie scores, pop concerts and of course incredibly beautiful classical music. The HSO also brings international guest musicians to share their talents with Hawaii audiences. Our own HSO is truly one of the things that make Hawaii so special.

Please support HB1860 and its companion bill SB2603

Mahalo Piha, Elaina Malm

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:31:36 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosalyn Cheng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. The orchestra consistently delivers world class performances, and in a state where it can be challenging to attract highly accomplished artists and ensembles, the Symphony stands out for its exceptional caliber. Through meaningful collaborations with diverse artists and its commitment to inspiring younger generations and educating our community, the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra enriches our cultural landscape. Official recognition will help ensure that world class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

Thank you,

Rosalyn Cheng

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:41:29 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Chock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Everyone knows that great civilizations nurture and survive on great art. While pop music has its value, large-scale classical music provides something beyond that. A full stage of talented musicians playing a mathematically complex composition in unison; with each person having a defined role; and performing his or her part at just the right moments in tonal harmony; evoking emotional and intellectual resonances over a skein of undulating time—this is something that our Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has shown it can do extremely well. And this should create a useful analogy for our legislators and educators.

Social value comes in many forms. Our society more than ever needs an informed, trained, responsible, and caring public, placing more emphasis on the greater good than on individual desires. Our Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra starts its educational outreach with young students: at some periods in our local history, competitions among high schools were highly valued and crucial in teaching skill, character, perseverance, and emotional maturity, among other things. "Working together" and "teamwork" are often spoken of; classical music classes require it, or the result is clearly unacceptable. This is a different kind of "winning." This may seem conceptually obvious, but it must be learned concretely. People need to hear human expressions that reach emotions that are as deep, joyful, or surprising as their own. Human maturity requires seeing yourself in art. Aside from the well-documented correlation between music and intelligence, there is simply the need for people to share artistic beauty, to feel human together. The HSO conveys that.

Long-time youth symphony director Henry Miyamura was known to teach the concept of harmonics thusly: When tuning up the orchestra, if everyone plays their note perfectly, not only can you hear all those notes, but you will also hear a note that no one is actually playing, hovering above the orchestra. Is that science, or magic, or something else? It is like a musical version of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

So, whether focusing on the younger generations, or playing the proven classics, or exploring more recent approaches to classical music from a Polynesian or Asian tonal or rhythmic perspective, HSO can be integral to our evolving culture on a range of levels. Such valuable foundational components of society need to be supported. Hopefully, those in charge of not only our budget, but of the vision for our society in the generations ahead, will see the value of putting money where it is needed. And, yes, our state government with its myriad parts is like an orchestra. But, surely, there is room for more than only that. Please vote your support of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.



**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:30:10 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Shattuck	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I, James Shattuck, am fully supportive of HB1860 to designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony**, as it will ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come. I have been a patron of the Arts for most of my life and more so during the last 8 years and truly see the positive effects and energy it provides to the community. The HSO's community outreach and performances are worthy of support.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:50:54 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bonnie Heung Norman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The HSO and its musicians have a massive cultural impact on our community. As a public school student that grew up in Kalihi, the education and value that the musicians fostered in me led me to a career around the world I could've only imagined. I've now toured internationally in Austria, Japan, Germany and also helped design violin strings for an international business in NYC. Those however, are still not the important takeaways. In the end, it was the character building, creativity, and grit that the HSO paved a consistent environment for that I could benefit from as a keiki. All keiki deserve this opportunity and that starts with funding our local arts. Thank you.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:56:42 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Soo Sun Choe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra deserves recognition as Hawai'i's state orchestra. Music of all kinds plays such an important part in people's lives. All of my children have benefitted from learning to play music, irregardless of talent. It is important to train the ear and mind, and express from the heart. In an age of distractions and inattention we need activities that bring us focus, community and joy.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:13:07 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jan Bigalke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HSO is an integral part of our state culture as it engages with citizens in schools and public places and incorporates Hawaiian culture into the classical music repertoire by playing music written by local composers and inviting Hawaiian musicians to perform with the symphony. I want state tax money to support this important state institution.

Thank you!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:28:44 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terance Bigalke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is one of the true cultural treasures of the entire state of Hawai'i. Through its tireless efforts to reach all segments of the Hawai'i community, HSO plays a critical role in strengthening appreciation of Hawaiian, Western and world music, helping to extend this to older and younger generations state wide. I would like to see my state tax dollars go toward preserving and increasing the reach of HSO for many years to come.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:47:02 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daryce Watanabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1860 to designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. I have supported our symphony since the days of the Honolulu Symphony, and I remember how deeply saddening it was to lose the opportunity to experience live classical music in our community. That loss was felt not only by longtime patrons, but even more so by our broader community and our keiki.

The return of a thriving symphony has restored something truly meaningful to Hawai‘i. Beyond the performances themselves, the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra plays an essential role in music education—introducing children to live orchestral music, fostering musical appreciation, and opening doors to creativity, discipline, and cultural understanding. These early experiences can be transformative, planting seeds that last a lifetime, whether or not a child goes on to pursue music.

Designating the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony honors its resilience, its service to our community, and its commitment to educating and inspiring future generations. I respectfully urge your support of HB1860.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:03:08 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lee Putnam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our community is unusually fortunate to have a symphony of very high quality. Music of every kind enriches our lives. The symphony has an active outreach and education program so that everyone can benefit from exposure to this enduring and evolving art form. I strongly support this bill.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:07:42 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to support the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. Please pass HB 1860. It will help to ensure that world-class symphonic music continues to serve our community and our keiki for generations to come.

Janet Morse

Kaneohe

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:15:33 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharene Taba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Like many families growing up in Hawai`i, my parents worked 3.5 full time jobs between them and it was important that I had activities and lots of homework.

The Honolulu Symphony is where my school found an orchestra teacher. The Honolulu Symphony is where my parents found me a private teacher.

The Symphony was a walk in the most beautiful park I could imagine, a better version of ourselves, a visit to a museum where we examine and take pleasure in the sights and sounds around us. And in reality, a place where 80 people could sit and work together to create extraordinary worlds out of thin air for the audience. My father would fall asleep in these Tuesday night concerts, and would wake up in time to clap enthusiastically. I watched him and the orchestra with delight, a similar feeling came over me when I would take my own children to hear the Hawai`i Symphony Orchestra, watching their faces as we listen together.

Over the years, the conductors have changed, the name has changed, but the orchestra has more familiar faces- some of the local kids have become incredible classical musicians thanks to their teachers, their schools, their parents, and their Hawai`i Symphony Orchestra.

I now work at Hawai`i Public Radio, and I see how non-profit organizations rely solely on the surplus of generous hearts. Every week, I interview visiting soloists, outstanding music students, world class musicians and composers, and they are all here because of the Hawai`i Symphony Orchestra. And I am reminded that the Hawai`i Symphony Orchestra is here for us.

Please support the HSO as they have supported us. Thank you for your time-

Sharene Keli`ipunilei Lum Taba

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:30:15 AM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dean Taba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. It is so important for our community!

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:44:52 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rebecca Matayoshi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Providing access to the arts is an important necessity in any community. By passing HB1860 and making Hawai'i Symphony a state orchestra, this would allow the organization to continue providing classical music to the residents of Hawai'i. Not only is it vital for the listeners and audience, but it creates jobs for people, which in turn helps the fabric of the local economy. The musicians employed by this symphony are of the highest caliber and have dedicated their entire lives toward honing their craft. The members of the administrative staff are incredible and making this entity a state-supported group would only strengthen and further reinforce the cultural richness of the islands.

**HB-1860**

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:30:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 2/6/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lily Ling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A vibrant community needs art and culture to stay vibrant. I strongly support HB 1860 to designate HSO Honolulu's official state symphony. Mahalo.