



Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i
Regular Session of 2026
House Committee on Culture and Arts
Testimony by Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra
March 18, 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2603 SD1
– 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 **SB2603 SD1**, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This designation would ensure **equal access to world-class symphonic music for all residents, regardless of where they live.**

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

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

1. HSO Provides Significant Public Service to the State

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

- More than 40 diverse concerts annually
- Free community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawai'i Seas
- Our Na Hoku Opio - Young Stars competition that showcases the talented young Hawai'i students
- Side-by-side projects with Hawai'i Youth Symphony
- A Masterworks Series that brings the world's best music and greatest artists to Hawai'i

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

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

2. HSO Has Deep Historical Roots in Hawai'i

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Summary

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

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

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

Thank you for your support of **SB2603 SD1** to make symphonic music a lasting and meaningful part of life for all Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



Dane Lam
Music and Artistic Director



Amy Iwano
President and CEO



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

RE: SB 2603 SD1 - Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra – **In Support**
Wednesday, March 18, 2026; 10:30 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 SB 2603 SD1, 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," SB 2603 SD1 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 SB 2603 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Peter Dames
President & CEO



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

**IN SUPPORT OF SB 2603 SD1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

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

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

RMH supports SB 2603 SD1, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and provides a framework for state support, accountability, and annual reporting.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra has served our community for generations through public performances, arts education programs, and partnerships that help cultivate the next generation of musicians. The orchestra's outreach programs, including free performances in parks and community venues, as well as opportunities for public school educators and students to attend performances through Department of Education initiatives, provide meaningful access to the arts for residents across the state.

Cultural institutions such as the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra also contribute to economic activity in surrounding communities. Symphony performances often bring patrons into nearby restaurants, retail shops, parking facilities, and hospitality venues before and after performances. These events support local businesses while helping activate our urban and cultural districts.

From a broader economic perspective, strong arts and cultural programming strengthens Hawai'i's appeal as a global destination. Visitors increasingly seek authentic and enriching experiences, and a recognized State Symphony Orchestra enhances Hawai'i's reputation as a place where arts, culture, and community engagement are valued and supported.

RMH appreciates that this measure recognizes the orchestra's longstanding public service and establishes appropriate oversight through annual reporting to the Legislature while supporting its continued independence and mission.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully urges passage of SB 2603 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Erdman
Interim President and CEO
Retail Merchants of Hawai'i



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March 12, 2026

SB2603 SD1 – Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra

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

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

My name is Paul Kosasa, and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of ABC Stores, a locally owned business that proudly serves Hawai'i's communities for more than seven decades. I also currently serve as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Honolulu Symphony. I respectfully submit this testimony to **support SB2603 SD1**.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra fulfills an important public purpose through cultural programming, educational outreach, and statewide community engagement. Should the Orchestra be designated as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, it is respectfully recommended that appropriate funding be considered to support effective administration, continued programming, and proper accountability, in accordance with relevant legislation.

Including operational funding would help ensure stability, allow responsible planning, and support the delivery of services envisioned by the Legislature. Adequate upfront support will also reduce implementation challenges.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support SB2603 SD1 with funding to support the operations of the Symphony. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide additional testimony and for your continued commitment to Hawai'i's cultural institutions.

Mahalo,

Paul Kosasa
President & Chief Executive Officer
ABC Stores

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:02:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Blake	Kauai Concert Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HSO should be Hawaii's official symphony orchestra. They've done the work for decades and deserve the accolades and distinction. They have no official competitors and our music and entertainment and arts environment wouldn't be as rich without them. It's a no brainer.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:42:54 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Chung	Kauai Concert Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the Artistic Director of the Kaua‘i Concert Association - a nonprofit arts organization on the neighboring island of Kaua‘i, I wish to support this movement to name the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official Symphony Orchestra of the State of Hawai‘i. They work tirelessly to ensure that the local community has access to world-class performing arts by providing flourishing concert seasons every year. HSO has also successfully integrated prominent local artists into the regular season by way of HapaSymphony and many more opportunities. It is important to note that HSO’s reach into the community extends far beyond giving joy to concert attendees. In addition to providing employment for professional musicians and staff, these musicians are the same musicians who share their gifts by teaching music students at local and private schools, and music lesson studios all over O‘ahu and neighboring islands. Naming Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra the official Symphony Orchestra of the State of Hawai‘i would support them in their continued mission to enrich the Hawai‘i community with the liveliness of the arts.

Monica Chung, Artistic Director - Kaua‘i Concert Association



**Hawai'i Alliance
for Arts
Education
dba Hawai'i Arts
Alliance**

**Testimony of the Hawai'i Arts Alliance
In Support of SB2603 (SD1)
Relating to the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra**

Dear Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Arts Alliance **supports SB2603**, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra plays a vital public role in our state—providing educational opportunities, free and low-cost community programming, and access to high-quality arts experiences for residents across Hawai'i.

As we have previously shared in earlier testimony, continued investment in cornerstone cultural institutions like the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra strengthens our broader arts ecosystem and ensures access to the arts for students, families, and communities statewide.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Gaye Humphrey
Executive Director
Hawai'i Arts Alliance

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16 March 2026

House Committee on Culture & the Arts (CAA)
Representative Jeanné Kapela, Chair
Representative Sam Satoru Kong, Vice Chair

***Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of
SB 2603 SD 1 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra***

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

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

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

We are grateful to the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra for the many ways that they already help to encourage and inspire our young people, particularly via the flagship, **Side-by-Side collaborations** that we undertake together semiannually for HYS’ Youth Symphony and Pacific Music Institute orchestras. (A “Side-by-Side” is a rehearsal/concert event that takes place when the high school members of HYS sit next to an adult professional from HSO, kind of like joining the major leagues for the day!

The magnitude of what these projects mean to our youth is best expressed by them and their HSO counterparts: <https://youtu.be/5L5wn2ULFOg>

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





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

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

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



With the advancement of this bill, we look forward to seeing what HSO will do to continue bringing our community together through music. Thank you for advancing SB 2603 SD1!

Sincerely,

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

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

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 12:21:59 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Nakazono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is David Nakazono, and I am honored to serve as Principal Trumpet of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO). I submit this testimony in strong support of SB2603, which would designate the HSO as the official State Orchestra of Hawai‘i.

In January of this year, the HSO performed Mahler’s Ninth Symphony. It is a deeply introspective work—one that wrestles with mortality, fragility, and the beauty of life itself. Sitting on stage, you could feel the stillness in the hall. At the end, the music fades into near silence, and for several moments, no one moved. That shared silence—between musicians and audience—was one of the most powerful experiences I’ve had as a performer.

Moments like that remind me of what music can offer to a community. It invites reflection, connection, and a sense of something larger than ourselves.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra brings this same spirit to communities across our state. As a musician, I’ve seen firsthand how a single performance can deeply impact an audience—whether it’s a student experiencing live symphonic music for the first time, an elder reconnecting with meaningful memories, or a family simply sharing in something beautiful together.

Beyond the concert hall, the HSO is committed to serving Hawai‘i through:

- Free concerts in parks and public spaces, expanding access to live music
- Educational programs such as *Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds* and *Symphony of the Hawai‘i Forests*
- Side-by-side mentorship with young musicians across the islands
- Collaborations with local artists such as Robert Cazimero and Jake Shimabukuro, reflecting Hawai‘i’s unique cultural identity
- An upcoming tour to Maui this September, with a broader vision of regular inter-island performances that bring symphonic music to communities statewide

Designating the HSO as the official State Orchestra would not simply recognize an institution—it would affirm a lasting commitment to the people of Hawai‘i. It would ensure that this work of education, cultural connection, and community enrichment continues to grow for future generations, across all islands.

I respectfully urge your support of SB2603.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

David Nakazono
Principal Trumpet, Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:05:37 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

lynne matusow

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:15:10 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:35:20 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Members,

I am writing to support SB2603. 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 attention.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 9:29:41 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this legislation and its intent to celebrate and help fund the public benefits of the symphony orchestra.

With aloha,

David Ball

Waiālae-Kahala

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 1:54:39 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Support on SB2603 SD1

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. Institutions like the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra play a vital role in the state's cultural and educational infrastructure. Over time, the HSO has grown into a cultural institution shaped by Hawai'i and uniquely of Hawai'i. Through initiatives such as the HapaSymphony Series, performances featuring traditional Hawaiian music, and commissions of local composers, the Orchestra brings a distinctly Pacific perspective to the symphonic tradition.

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

I am especially encouraged that 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.

Music also plays a unique role in fostering unity. In a place as culturally diverse as Hawai'i, shared musical experiences create common ground across generations, backgrounds, and communities. Sitting together in a performance, or participating in a workshop, allows people to

experience connection without requiring shared language or perspective. In this way, the Symphony helps strengthen the social fabric that holds our islands together.

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

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

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

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

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

Christopher LaDue

Community member and supporter of arts accessibility in Hawai‘i

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:07:18 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rie Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a world class orchestra that deserves to be the official symphony orchestra of Hawaii. I fully support this proposal.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:07:29 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rijumon Sarkar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a frequent visitor turned into new Hawai'i resident I wholeheartedly support this bill to make Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra the state symphony of Hawai'i. I've attended many concerts and it's clear to me this important part of the arts scene in Hawai'i brings together residents from all walks of life, all ages, all cultures, and the programming is diverse and relevant to lovers of traditional classical music and to those who appreciate contemporary instrumental music. The recent US premiere of a geomungo concerto transcribed by a local UH professor, followed by Brahms 4th Symphony is a perfect example of the unique flavor and diversity of arts that Hawai'i symphony can bring. This bill will unlock funding that should allow more than 1 performance of these intricate pieces and spread more joy to the masses.

Thank you.

Rick Sarkar

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:08:06 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonia Blackiston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this measure!

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:13:03 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lucille Frances	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support Hawaii Symphony as official state

symphony.

This will bring advantages in advertising and promotion of music programs for all.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:14:33 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward K. Conklin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support designation of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony - it is a meaningful recognition that supports the orchestra's mission to deliver music, education, and cultural enrichment to every corner of Hawai'i.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:18:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Micah Mizumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

I am writing today in strong support of SB2603 SD1.

The HSO is much more than a performing arts group; it is a vital community institution. For years, they have brought world-class music to our islands, ensuring that both our keiki and our kūpuna have access to the transformative power of a live orchestra.

I am a frequent attendee of HSO concerts and look forward to their performances throughout the year. By designating the HSO as the official state symphony, we are recognizing their mission to provide education and cultural enrichment to Hawai'i. This recognition ensures that the music I enjoy today will continue to thrive for generations to come.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB2603 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Micah

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:23:00 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Khlopin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB2603 SD1

To: The Hawai'i State Legislature

From: Martha Khlopin

Position: Strong Support

Measure Title: RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

Testimony:

"To the Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Martha Khlopin, and I am writing in strong support of SB2603 SD1.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) is so much more than a musical ensemble; it is a vital pillar of our community's well-being. My family and friends have enjoyed many performances and each one has been exceptional. I believe this official designation and the accompanying funding are essential for several reasons:

- **Impact on our Youth:** The HSO provides invaluable educational opportunities for our keiki. For many students, the orchestra is their first exposure to the discipline and beauty of classical music. Supporting this bill ensures that future generations of local musicians have a professional standard to look up to right here at home.
- **Enrichment for our Aged (Kupuna):** For our elderly population, the symphony offers a profound sense of community and cultural enrichment. Music is a powerful tool for mental health and social connection, and the HSO's performances provide a high-quality experience that significantly enhances the quality of life for our seniors.
- **State Identity:** Formally designating the HSO as the 'State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra' honors our history and ensures that the arts remain a priority in our state's identity.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB2603 SD1 to secure the future of this world-class institution.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to testify,

Martha Khlopin

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:35:23 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting a Hawai‘i state-sponsored professional symphony orchestra is deeply meaningful to me because it strengthens our community, enriches our cultural life, and provides lasting educational opportunities for future generations.

First, a professional symphony orchestra enriches the cultural fabric of Hawai‘i. Living in an island state can sometimes limit access to large-scale performing arts that people on the mainland may take for granted. A state-supported orchestra ensures that residents and visitors alike can experience world-class symphonic music without leaving the islands. These performances celebrate not only classical repertoire but also the unique cultural influences that make Hawai‘i special, blending global traditions with local identity. Second, a symphony orchestra plays a vital role in education and inspiration. When students attend live performances or participate in outreach programs, they see what is possible through dedication, creativity, and collaboration. Music education has been shown to strengthen discipline, listening skills, and emotional expression. A strong professional orchestra can partner with schools, mentor young musicians, and inspire students who may one day become performers, teachers, or lifelong supporters of the arts. I am a lifelong lover of classical, jazz and popular music as a result of learning to play the violin at age 11 that was introduced to me through a free DOE music program at my elementary school (a Honolulu Symphony violinist was the "traveling" string teacher for my school. All of my private violin teachers were Honolulu symphony violinists. I've continued to play in community orchestra groups for 50 years and support Hawaii Symphony as a season subscriber. Third, a state-sponsored orchestra contributes to Hawai‘i’s economy and sense of community. Cultural institutions attract audiences, create jobs for musicians and arts professionals, and enhance the quality of life for residents. Visitors who come to Hawai‘i for its natural beauty also appreciate opportunities to experience its artistic offerings. A thriving symphony orchestra signals that Hawai‘i values both its natural and cultural treasures. For these reasons, supporting a Hawai‘i state-sponsored professional symphony orchestra is an investment in our people, our culture, and our future. It ensures that the beauty of orchestral music continues to inspire our communities and that the arts remain a vibrant part of life in our islands.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Nakamura

Honolulu resident

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:35:51 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maelani Valentine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official Orchestra of our state. I have attended their concerts many times in my life as well as benefitted from their visits to schools. My children have enjoyed going with their classes as well as with us as a family. It's one of the oldest symphonies in the nation and we should be proud of that!

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:36:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Powell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Submitting support for community support of the symphony

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:37:06 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Richards Dona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB2603 SD1, designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony.

As a season ticket holder, I have seen firsthand how the HSO enriches our community. Their performances bring people together across generations and backgrounds, offering world-class music here at home while also reflecting the unique cultural richness of Hawai'i. The orchestra is not only an artistic treasure, but also an educational and community resource that helps inspire creativity, connection, and a sense of shared experience in our islands.

Official recognition of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra would affirm the value of the arts in Hawai'i and help ensure that symphonic music continues to thrive for future generations. I respectfully urge you to support SB2603 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Angela Richards Dona

Honolulu, Hawai'i

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:38:42 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Kalani Zak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony is our pre-eminent music organization and deserves State support. I have worked for several years in bringing the symphony's concerts to air on Hawaii Public Radio. I am familiar with the breadth and depth of their musical offerings. Not only does the symphony support a large number of local musicians, it serves as an inspiration to and a catalyst in commissioning and supporting emerging composers around the Pacific Rim. The symphony draws international artists to our shores, and offers outreach and support for young musicians in our community. It is one of our "signature" arts organizations that presents the best of Hawaii to the world. The symphony deserves meaningful support from the State of Hawaii.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 1:46:41 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alma M. Nagao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am asking for ;your support of SB2603 designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the state orchestra of Hawaii. The Royal Hawaiian Band is the city's orchestra; please designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the state orchestra.

Hawaii needs the Symphony Orchestra which has provided family concerts, brought in famous musicians, introduced the students to playing with the symphony, brought music into the schools of Hawaii and provided countless other avenues.

Our grandson was among the many inspired by the Symphony; he went on the receive a Master's degree in Violin Performance and today he not only plays with the Symphony but also teaches orchestra to students in the classroom so the love of music and the arts can live in Hawaii for years to come.

Please support SB2603 and have Hawaii be the first to have our Orchesra recognized for the contribution to the Arts and cultural life of all our citizens. Thank you.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:08:29 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vicky Cayetano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Kong and Committee Members,

I stand in strong support of SB 2603 SD1, the companion bill to HB 1860 HD2, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony. This designation would elevate not only the HSO, but the overall acknowledgement of the importance of arts and culture in the State of Hawai'i. It would be a first for any state in the country to make such a designation and would showcase Hawai'i as a place that values culture and arts in our community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:41:04 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Autumn Woods	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of SB2603 SD1, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State Symphony. As both a longtime patron and a proud member of the HSO staff, I've seen the extraordinary reach of this orchestra, from the concert hall to classrooms, neighborhood parks, and public spaces across O'ahu.

My family first connected with the HSO during the pandemic, streaming concerts from home. That experience moved us to become subscribers and has deeply shaped my daughter's journey as a young musician. Thanks to HSO, she's conducted the orchestra at the Waikiki Shell, interned with staff, and volunteered after graduation. Today, she's pursuing music in college, proof of the orchestra's lasting impact.

Since joining the HSO team a year ago, I've seen just how embedded this organization is in our community. Our musicians are not only world-class performers, but educators and mentors who inspire students, support teachers, and bring music to places where it's often least expected and most needed.

The HSO is a vital part of Hawai'i's cultural and educational landscape. I respectfully urge your support for SB2603 SD1 to ensure this beloved institution continues to uplift, educate, and unite our community for generations to come.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Autumn Woods
Director of Advancement
Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 2:58:29 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Queenie M. Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please give due consideration to back this bill in support of the Hawaii Symphony. Hawaii is a progressive State and the programs reflect our multicultural heritages. It is for Everybody!

Mahalo piha,

Queenie Mow Chee

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:09:53 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul M Chandler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please make HSO our official symponny. We, and they, deserve this honor. Mahalo for your consideration.

Paul M Chandler

SB2603

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:31:07 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Nokes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My wife Paula and I have been Hawaii Symphony Orchestra patrons in its current and previous incarnations for over 20 years. We have found the experience of hearing live orchestral music tremendously enriching.

Our symphony is treasure. In addition to concerts in Honolulu, they perform all over the state for residents of all ages.

Designating them as our official state symphony would be well earned and meaningful recognition for them. Please vote yes.

Mahalo for your attention,
Mark and Paula Nokes

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:20:23 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Moffitt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I write in strong support of SB2603 SD1,

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra delivers world class performances, music education and cultural enrichment throughout our State and is very deserving of The State Orchestra of Hawai'i designation.

Thank you,

James Moffitt, President

Musicians' Association of Hawai'i, Local 677

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 4:46:26 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Takata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support SB 2603. Dedicating the HSO as the official state symphony would help support the symphony for generations to come. The cultural value is significant to our community and enriches the lives of so many children and adults.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:29:33 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Hirai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sd1: integrated into the community esp this year

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 6:48:31 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Senner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for considering these comments. The Hawaii Symphony is a wonderful resource for the State of Hawaii. Dedicated people doing so much wonderful work to bring great music to the community, in many ways & to many places. An official recognition is well deserved.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:14:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariann Tesauro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Symphony and SB2603 SD1.

Mariann Tesauro

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:47:22 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support SB 2693 SD1 as it will ensure the sustainment of an invaluable resource for music appreciation for all generations in Hawaii.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 7:59:05 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Naylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider designating the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony.** **The HSO** is recognized for their mission to deliver music, education, and cultural enrichment to every corner of Hawai'i. The HSO is a symbol of culture and the healthy cosmopolitan community Hawaii is and should continue to be.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy K. Naylor

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:23:28 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Cha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I would like to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Thank you for your time.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:33:15 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JOANNE PARKER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

Mahalo

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:48:38 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Flanter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of this bill. The Hawai'i Symphony is a critically important institution that needs this designation to be able to serve the whole state in an even more meaningful way.

From classical to pops to education, it brings many important things to our community and should be designated Hawai'i's official symphony.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:00:10 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bethany Mariconda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Bethany Mariconda, and I am a public high school teacher here in Hawai‘i. I am writing to express my **strong support for SB2603 SD1**.

In my classroom, I see every day how essential it is for our students to have access to high-level cultural institutions. Just as our local universities provide a vital pathway for students who might not otherwise see themselves in higher education, the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) provides a critical "open door" to the world of fine arts.

I support this bill because the HSO is a unique space where:

- **Barriers are broken:** It makes world-class music accessible to our keiki, showing them that they belong in these spaces of excellence.
- **Generational divides are bridged:** It is one of the few places where our students and our kūpuna can share an immersive, transformative experience side-by-side.
- **Island culture is enriched:** The HSO doesn't just play music; it creates a community anchor that reflects the soul and diversity of Hawai‘i, as well as inspire it to see beyond.

For our students to become well-rounded citizens, they need to be immersed in the arts. Designating the HSO as the official state symphony is a formal commitment to the idea that culture and beauty should be accessible to every person in our islands, regardless of their background.

I urge the committee to pass SB2603 SD1. Mahalo nui loa for your time and for your support of our educators and the arts.

Sincerely,

Bethany Mariconda

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:36:23 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 2603. The HSO is an important investment into the culture of Hawaii. Thank you.

Ted Meehan

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 10:58:52 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Gainsley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support SB 2603, SD1.

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra plays an important role in bringing a high level of music and performance to our community—something that meaningfully enriches the cultural and educational landscape of the State.

For many residents, and especially for students, this kind of exposure broadens perspectives, deepens appreciation for the arts, and creates opportunities that would otherwise be limited.

Supporting the Symphony is a way to ensure that this level of access and enrichment remains part of Hawaii’s community for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Gainsley

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 2:33:27 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2603 SD1, the companion bill to HB1860 HD2, which would designate the **Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony** - a meaningful recognition that supports our mission to deliver music, education, and cultural enrichment to every corner of Hawai'i.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:09:23 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

a meaningful recognition that supports HSO's mission to deliver music, education, and cultural enrichment to every corner of Hawai'i.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 7:47:20 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Please support SB2603 SD 1 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I think this designation would lead to more opportunities for the people of Hawaii to be enriched, uplifted and healed by the beautiful music of the wonderful musicians of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 8:43:39 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia M. Nagao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2603 SD1, designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. Founded in 1900, the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (formerly known as the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra), is one of the oldest U.S. orchestras west of the Rocky Mountains. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a vital part of our community, bringing people together through performances at the Hawaii Theatre and Neil S. Blaisdell Concert Hall, as well as through educational outreach programs. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra provides music education programs in schools and mentors young orchestra students. Symphonic music is a universal language, transcending barriers of age, race, and background, connecting us on an emotional level. Symphonic music has the ability to enrich and enhance our lives, and inspire future generations of artists. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is a cultural treasure, worth investing in and protecting. Please support this institution to ensure symphonic music continues to be available for future generations.

Thank you,

Marcia M. Nagao

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:11:23 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli Lim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting a symphony is an investment in the cultural heart of our community. Believing in the arts is an essential part of a vibrant, thriving society. Through education programs, outreach initiatives, and collaborations with local artists, our Hawaii Symphony Orchestra plays a key role in shaping the future of the arts. As an avid supporter, I've witnessed firsthand the incredible impact that this orchestra can have on both the individual and collective experience. The music is not just beautiful, it's transformative. It is an experience that enriches the soul; every performance is a clear example of how the beauty of music can forge connections and bring about hope and healing in all of our lives.

By supporting our symphony, you're also ensuring that talented musicians can continue to perform, create, and inspire. My brother and sister-in-law are among the many musicians who have dedicated their lives to music. They are passionate about what they do; it is their life, their love, and their passion. Without their music, we lose a huge part of what makes this community alive. There were a few years when we did not have our HSO, and those years were deeply felt; if you lose music, you lose the heart and soul of our community.

Please consider permanently making HSO our state orchestra! Music is hope, music is love; it's beauty will transform the lives of generations to come.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 9:28:23 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Weissman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra being given state recognition and financial support!

Mahalo,

Paul Weissman

3260 Pacific Hts Rd

Honolulu, HI 96813

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:01:13 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Ellen Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have lived across the continental United States, and currently a resident in Hawai‘i, where each city has a major symphony orchestra supported publicly and privately by citizens, businesses, foundations, and federal, state, and local government. If Honolulu and Hawai‘i didn't have as culturally vibrant environment, I would not have been as enthusiastic about relocating here. **A strong cultural sector attracts business investment.**

Honolulu is the home of HSO, and downtown areas are growing. Public funding for a symphony provides operating stability and attracts other funding sources that HSO can leverage to create a diverse funding base.

HSO may be the first symphony performance people experience whether they are tourists seeking experiences or young private and public school children attending a field trip. Public and private funding helps to ensure that the symphony remains accessible to the community and not simply to those with higher incomes.

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 11:03:26 AM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully and wholeheartedly support this bill.

Having our own symphony is a wonderful blessing and making it more available to other others is very important culturally.

thank you for your consideration

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & ARTS

House of Representatives

The Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2026

Hearing Date and Time: March 18, 2026 at 10:30 AM

Re: **SB 2603, SD 1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Written Testimony Only (In Support)

CHAIR KAPELA, VICE CHAIR KONG, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Lloyd Lim and I am testifying in my individual capacity in strong support of SB 2603, SD 1 designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the Hawaii State orchestra and providing partial funding. The current HSO is a vastly superior orchestra to the HSO of 20 to 50 years ago. This is an excellent orchestra on the upswing with great future potential for Hawaii. The string section sound would surprise anyone. I have heard live performances by the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Montreal Symphony and the St. Louis Symphony. I feel as if I have a basis for comparison. Recently, the HSO put on the Mozart Oboe Concerto and the Mahler 9 (a complex piece). I had a surreal feeling as I came out of the hall—could this fine a concert really be done in Hawaii, and with that big an audience turnout? Yes!

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

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

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

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

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

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

SB-2603-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 1:17:48 PM

Testimony for CAA on 3/18/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
susan hassett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

YES!! Please make this Hawaii Symphony our official state orchestra! They have become a great musical fixture for our State.

I'm not even sure why we must make them "Official", unless perhaps this helps with funding, prestige, status, etc.. as long as can still afford a ticket!!