

Thomas J. Gulick, Executive Director, Honolulu Symphony  
To the Committee on Economic Development and Taxation  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Hearing date: Tuesday, February 12, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

**In Support of SB 304, SD1, Making an Appropriation for the Honolulu Symphony and its Programs**

Many of you have heard the recent press regarding the financial plight of the Honolulu Symphony. The past several months have been extremely trying for the organization. Our musicians have played despite not knowing when their next paycheck will come, and our administrative staff has made the same sacrifice to ensure the continuation of this organization.

As executive director, these are the times we hope to never face. Through this difficulty, however, I have seen what this orchestra and the Honolulu Symphony mean to our community. In December, our community stepped forward to show their support. Through an incredible outpouring of aloha the Honolulu Symphony raised over half a million dollars in just over three weeks. Over 1,000 individuals from across our state, the mainland, and as far away as Singapore made a commitment to the see the continuation of the oldest orchestra west of the Rocky Mountains. These funds allowed the organization to meet its immediate payroll and critical operational needs, however, the Honolulu Symphony still faces a significant operational shortfall which threatens its existence.

We thank the State for recognizing the importance of a professional symphony orchestra in Hawaii and for its wish to support this cultural and educational asset. Through Act 156, this legislative body, has made provisions for an increase in the long term funding and support off the Honolulu Symphony through an increase in its permanent endowment. The distinction between the provisions of Act 156 and the current request in HB3243 must not be confused.

In clarification of the relationships that exist, the Honolulu Symphony Society is the administrative entity that is tasked with the daily operations of the organization. The Honolulu Symphony Foundation is a separate entity charged with the maintenance and administration of funds for the perpetuation of a professional symphony orchestra in Hawaii.

Act 156 allows for a transfer of up to \$4 million to the Honolulu Symphony Foundation and the organization's permanent endowment fund. The funding must be matched on a 1-to-1 basis and only the interest gained may be utilized for operational needs. Interest income through Act 156 is estimated to generate approximately \$200,000 a year, however, this revenue would not be realized until a year after funds have been placed in endowment. Additionally, even if these funds were available immediately, they would be insufficient to meet the current operational shortfall of the Honolulu Symphony.

SB 304, SD1 seeks a direct appropriation of \$810,000 to the Honolulu Symphony Society in support musician's salary and ongoing programming. This bill specifically addresses a critical shortfall in revenues and requests immediate operational support to sustain the organization and its many educational programs.

The Honolulu Symphony has recently completed an education and outreach tour to the island of Maui. Over the course of four days, ensembles from our orchestra visited schools from around the island to share their special gift and love of music. The highlight of this tour was a free community concert held at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center. In its first full-orchestra concert on Maui in over 15 years, the Honolulu Symphony performed before a capacity crowd of over 1,200 individuals in a program that offered both recognizable classics as well as the beautiful voice of local leo ki'eki'e artist, Raiatea Helm.

The Honolulu Symphony is a cultural and educational asset which is in serious financial jeopardy at this time, and I respectfully request the support of this committee of SD 304, SD1.

**testimony**

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**From:** Raymond Burghardt [burghardtrf@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 11, 2008 5:33 PM  
**To:** testimony  
**Subject:** Support of SB304, SD1 Relating to Culture

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Senator Will Espero, Vice Chair  
Committee on Economic Development and Taxation

From Raymond F. Burghardt  
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I am in favor of SB304, which appropriates funds for fiscal year 2008-09 to meet the shortfall for the the operation of the Honolulu Symphony and its programs.

The amount that the symphony can receive from last year's \$4 million endowment appropriation will not make up the funds needed for wages and other expenses. As you are aware, that shortfall was in part created when the symphony was displaced by the Lion King production. The musicians have not been paid on time since December and are several weeks behind in pay.

Those of us who are part of the regular audience of the symphony orchestra consider it one of Honolulu's great cultural assets, an important part of what makes this one of America's most liveable cities. In addition to its own concerts, the orchestra is a critical element in making possible productions such of those of the Honolulu Opera Theatre. I am also very concerned that if the orchestra disappears, we will also the mentors and music teachers for our children. If we lose the orchestra, we will lose the center piece that holds together this State's entire classical music system. The effect will even be felt in lost performances of jazz and other non-classical music, which is done by many of the same players. Without the orchestra, they will go elsewhere.

I strongly urge you to pass SB304.

Sincerely,

Ray Burghardt

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