



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 441, RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025      **TIME:** 10:03 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 211

**TESTIFIER(S):**      **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact Randall S. Nishiyama,  
Deputy Attorney General, at (808) 586-1267)

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Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

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

This bill designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the "State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra" and exempts it from the qualifying standards and conditions contained in chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to allow it to regularly receive state funds without filing a grant application as required by chapter 42F in exchange for services to the State to be mutually negotiated.

1.      A Preamble Should Be Added to Senate Bill No. 441 to Promote the Public's Understanding of the Legislature's Intent of this Bill

We 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.

Further, article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii Constitution, provides that "[n]o grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." The HSO is a domestic nonprofit corporation. The attempt to statutorily exempt a nonprofit from the chapter 42F, HRS, standards that are constitutionally required is subject to challenge. However, for the HSO, section 40-88, HRS, indicates that there is a "Honolulu Symphony Trust" and the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund with funding through the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts: "There shall be established as a separate fund of the Honolulu symphony trust created by the trust agreement dated December 5, 1986, a fund to be known as the State of Hawaii endowment fund. The income and capital gains from the \$2,000,000 contributed by the State of Hawaii shall be transferred on a quarterly basis to the state foundation on culture and the arts, performing and visual arts events private contribution account to be used for the production of music by an Oahu-based symphony orchestra as determined by the state foundation on culture and the arts." Since the State Foundation of Culture and the Arts is already transferring the income and capital gains from the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund to the HSO, we suggest that the Legislature consider appropriating additional funding to the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund whose income and capital gains could then be used for the HSO.

To effectuate this suggestion, we suggest the following section be added to the bill:

"SECTION . There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or so much thereof as may be

necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026, for deposit into the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of accounting and general services for the purposes of this Act."

To facilitate the public's understanding of what the Legislature is trying to accomplish regarding providing public funding for the HSO, we recommend that a findings and purpose section be included in the bill outlining the history of the HSO, the support that the HSO has received from the State of Hawaii Endowment Fund, and the public benefits that have accrued from its existence.

2. Chapter 42F Exemptions for Nonprofits Other than the HSO are Constitutionally Problematic

We note that granting chapter 42F exemptions to nonprofits other than the HSO is likely to violate article VII, section 4, of the Hawaii Constitution. 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.



**HAWAII**

STATE FOUNDATION on  
CULTURE and the ARTS

No. 1 Capitol District Building  
250 South Hotel Street  
Second Floor  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Governor  
Josh Green, M.D.

Comptroller  
Keith A. Regan

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Sean Connelly  
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**Testimony of KAREN EWALD, Executive Director  
State Foundation on Culture and the Arts  
Before the  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Tuesday , February 26, 2025 Conference Room 211 at 10:03AM  
SENATE BILL 441  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committee,  
the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA), is pleased to offer **COMMENTS** on  
S.B.441 which Designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i  
Symphony Orchestra. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Appropriation.

The performing arts in Hawaii are a vital part of our community and currently receive  
SFCA support through General Fund appropriations from the legislature and Federal  
funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Performing Arts, including cultural  
presentations, represent 43% of total Biennium Grants awards and 72% of total Artists  
in the Schools projects. Music and music education are an important part of the cultural  
landscape. Hawaii, in the center of the Pacific Ocean is blessed with a variety of musical  
traditions. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra represents the finest in the orchestral  
tradition in Hawaii, serving the public and schools statewide.

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra regularly receives state funds in the form of grants  
from the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, Grants in Aid from the Hawaii  
legislature and quarterly dividends from State funds in the Hawaii Symphony  
Endowment fund.

The Hawaii Legislature initially gave \$2 million decades ago to establish the Honolulu  
Symphony Foundation Endowment. Then in 2006, the Hawaii State Legislature passed  
HB3235 HD1 SD1 CD1 Act 097 appropriating \$4,000,000 to the State of Hawaii  
Endowment fund to support the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, now known as the  
Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. The intent of the grant was to provide regular State  
support and requires the fund to be matched with private funds. The fund provides  
regular dividends to support the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. Understanding the status  
and performance of the fund is an important step when considering establishing  
additional State support. Should the legislature appropriate funds, the SFCA  
recommends the funds go to the endowment.

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

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 1:11:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Testifying for Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports SB 441.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
President  
[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



Randy Perreira  
President

# HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441  
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The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony by  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

February 26, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB441 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is a state federation of 76 affiliate labor organizations representing over 69,000 union members across Hawaii in industries including healthcare, construction, hospitality, entertainment, transportation, and government. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO serves its affiliates by advocating for the rights of working families, promoting fair wages, safe working conditions, and policies that strengthen Hawaii's workforce.

We are in support of SB441 because it recognizes the cultural and economic contributions of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and provides essential funding for its operations. The symphony plays a vital role in arts education, community engagement, and workforce opportunities for musicians, stagehands, and other professionals in the performing arts.

A strong symphony benefits the economy by creating stable jobs in the arts and attracting visitors who contribute to Hawaii's tourism industry. Public investment in the orchestra supports working families in the arts sector and helps sustain a vital cultural institution that has served Hawaii for generations.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure to strengthen Hawaii's arts community and support the workers who bring music and culture to our state.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
President



*The  
Store  
With  
Aloha*

ABC Stores  
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February 24, 2025

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
February 26, 2025  
Conference Room 211 at 10:03 AM

**Re: SB441 Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee. My name is John Mark Mageo, Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager of ABC Stores. ABC Stores employs over 2,200 residents across Hawaii, Las Vegas, Guam, and Saipan.

I am writing on behalf of ABC Stores to express our strong support for SB441, a bill that designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra; requires annual reports to the Legislature; and Appropriates funds.

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is not just a cultural treasure; it is a vital institution that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike. Through its diverse programming, educational outreach, and community engagement, the HSO fosters a deep appreciation for the arts and provides opportunities for people of all ages to experience the transformative power of music.

SB441 is crucial for ensuring the continued success and sustainability of the HSO. The funding provided by this bill will enable the orchestra to maintain its high standards of artistic excellence, expand its educational initiatives, and reach even more members of our community. Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies to vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion.

We urge you to pass SB441 and ensure that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra can continue to thrive and inspire future generations. Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to supporting the arts in Hawaii.

Mahalo,  
John Mark Mageo  
Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager  
(808) 597-3312  
jmageo@abcstores.com

Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i  
Regular Session of 2025  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Testimony by Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra  
February 26, 2025

**Board of Directors**

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**President & CEO**

*Amy Iwano*

**Music & Artistic  
Director**

*Dane Lam*

**Conductor  
Emeritus**

*JoAnn Falletta*

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB441 – RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 **SB441**, which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This designation is not just symbolic—it would provide essential funding to 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.

Right now, **many communities—particularly on the neighbor islands and in areas outside of cities—have little to no access to live symphonic music.** Music education opportunities are also unevenly distributed, despite clear evidence linking exposure to the arts with improved academic and social outcomes.

SB441 would allow the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra to:

- ✓ **Expand free public concerts statewide**
- ✓ **Enhance music education for thousands of Hawai'i's keiki**
- ✓ **Support local musicians and cultural collaborations**
- ✓ **Commission new works that reflect Hawai'i's unique heritage**

We are proud of all we offer at HSO, such as:

- More than 50 diverse concerts annually
- Free park and outdoor community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests
- Our Na Hoku Opio - Young Stars competition that showcases the talented young Hawai'i students
- Side-by-side projects with Hawai'i Youth Symphony





HAWAI'I  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

DANE LAM | MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

#### Board of Directors

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*Jinyoung Lee Won*

*Lucy Xie*

#### President & CEO

*Amy Iwano*

#### Music & Artistic Director

*Dane Lam*

#### Conductor Emeritus

*JoAnn Falletta*

- A Masterworks Series that brings the world's best music and greatest artists to Hawai'i
- Our HapaSymphony Series that combines the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Robert Cazimero, Jake Shimabukuro and Raitea Helm with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight
- 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
- 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

A **designated State Orchestra** would be a **cultural and economic asset**, supporting local jobs, driving tourism, and strengthening our communities through music. With funding from SB441, HSO could **reach more people on every island**—making the arts accessible to all.

We urge you to **pass SB441** and help 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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Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

**RE: SB 441 - Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra – In Support  
February 26, 2025; 10:03 AM  
Conference room 211 & Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee:

As a Board of Director of the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and on-behalf of Servco Pacific, Inc., **I am writing in strong support of SB 441**, which designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra and makes appropriations.

Founded in 1900, the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) has become an integral part of our community, not only by hosting over 50 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 441 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 441**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this measure.

Peter Dames  
President & CEO



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB441, RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

February 26, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Ways & Means committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** SB441, RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports public funding going towards the arts, artists, arts education and cultural organizations and initiatives. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a gift to our communities and schools.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. This designation will allow the state to further support the Symphony and its musicians, giving it the assistance it needs, including with funding to continue its work of educating and entertaining the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of SB441, RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at [legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org](mailto:legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org).

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

PO Box 2041 • Honolulu, HI 96805 • [www.hawaiidemocrats.org](http://www.hawaiidemocrats.org)



**Rosalee Agas Yuu, RN**  
President

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The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i  
Hawai'i State Senate  
Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony by  
Hawaii Nurses Association

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 441 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
February 26, 2025, 10:30 AM  
Conference Room 211, Hawaii State Capitol**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Labor:

**The Hawai'i Nurses Association – OPEIU Local 50 is affiliated with the AFL-CIO, was founded in 1917, and represents 4,000 nurses in the State of Hawai'i.**

The Hawai'i Nurses' Association **strongly supports SB 441**, designating the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the official State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra. As nurses, we witness firsthand the profound healing power of music in promoting emotional well-being, reducing stress, and supporting recovery for patients and caregivers alike. Studies have shown that music therapy can lower blood pressure, ease anxiety, and enhance overall health outcomes—making the symphony's contributions invaluable to our community's well-being. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra not only enriches our cultural landscape but also serves as a vital source of comfort and healing, particularly in times of crisis. By recognizing the orchestra's role in fostering both artistic excellence and holistic wellness, we affirm our commitment to a healthier, more harmonious Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Carol Philips, Legislative Specialist  
Hawaii Nurses' Association

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 7:57:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jean tsou tsukamoto	Testifying for Hawaii Youth Symphony	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a parent of a child who studied violin from age 5 to 18, I can speak to the importance of a vibrant symphony in the State. All three of his teachers were/are musicians with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. They are truly dedicated musicians who not only care about sharing music excellence with the community but also about mentoring and nurturing the love of music among Hawaii's youth.

Being a symphony musician in Hawaii is very, very tough. Each of them can easily move to the mainland and earn a better living. But they made the choice to commit to staying in Hawaii. We need this funding appropriation badly to ensure that Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is financially sound and stable in order to support these musicians. Classical music transcends generations. Hawaii must have a sustainable way to support an orchestra that provides so much joy to the community.

HSO deserves your support!

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 2:37:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Iggy Jang	Testifying for Hawaii Symphony Orchestra	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is in support of SB441.

I am employed by the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO). I joined the organization in 1997, and I truly believe its leadership, board members, volunteers, staff and musicians to be genuine cultural ambassadors of the State. I was fortunate, with HSO, to fulfill our mission on Oahu, Maui, Hawai‘i and Kauai over time. To cherish our islands and all they encompass, the musical voice of HSO is essential. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Iggy Jang

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:07:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Nakamichi	Testifying for Aloha International Piano Festival	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB441 which would designate the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the "State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra".

As a child, I often attended the Symphony having listened to some of the most inspiring concerts. I grew up with the Symphony. Upon becoming a concert pianist, I performed as soloist with the Symphony on numerous occasions. The HSO is a top-class orchestra on par with renowned orchestras around the world.

Music has an incredible ability to bring communities together, inspire creativity, and foster cultural enrichment. The symphony plays a vital role in preserving our rich musical heritage and providing a platform for talented musicians to share their craft.

Through its performances, educational outreach programs, and collaborations with local artists, the symphony significantly contributes to the vibrancy of our cultural landscape. It also supports the local economy, attracting visitors and creating jobs for performers, educators, and technicians.

I urge you to consider the lasting positive impact that this investment will have on our community and the future of the arts. Supporting our symphony is an investment in the cultural heart of our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Nakamichi

Pianist

Founding Artistic Director, Aloha International Piano Festival

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 12:06:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicole Ebisu	Testifying for Violin Artistry	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Nicole Ebisu, and I am a music teacher in Hawaii, as the owner of Violin Artistry and an orchestra teacher at Iolani School. I am writing today in strong support of recognizing the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State Orchestra of Hawaii.

In addition to being an educator, I had the honor of serving as a violinist with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (and formerly Honolulu Symphony) for the last 19 years. Through my time with the orchestra, I witnessed firsthand the profound impact it has on our community, inspiring audiences of all ages and providing a world-class musical experience that is unique to our islands.

As a teacher, I see how essential the HSO is to the development of young musicians. Many of my students rely on the symphony as a source of inspiration, motivation, and artistic excellence. Attending HSO performances exposes them to live orchestral music at the highest level, broadens their cultural awareness, and encourages them to strive for musical excellence in their own studies. Without the HSO, many young musicians would not have access to the professional mentorship and experiences that are crucial for their growth. They have been able to watch the concerts of famous artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Lang Lang, Ray Chen, Sarah Chang, Augustin Hadelich, Joshua Bell, and many more.

Beyond the classroom, the HSO plays a crucial role in our community. Their outreach programs bring music into schools, ensuring that students across the state—regardless of background or financial means—have opportunities to engage with professional musicians. These experiences not only enrich students’ musical education but also foster a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

I fondly remember a symphony tour to the Hilo, Big Island with Rai’atea Helm and Aaron Mahi about 15 years ago. We all gathered in a big auditorium with thousands of young children. Many of these children had never seen a classical instrument before. On this same trip, we split up into smaller groups to do school visits. Many of these children did not own shoes, or see a violin up close. It was an eye-opening experience, to say the least.

The HSO is more than just a performing ensemble; it is an integral part of Hawaii’s cultural identity. Through collaborations with local artists and performances of Hawaiian music, the orchestra helps preserve and promote the rich musical traditions of our state. Recognizing the HSO as the official State Orchestra would affirm Hawaii’s commitment to the arts and ensure the symphony’s continued ability to serve our community.



Additionally, the HSO contributes to Hawaii's economy and tourism industry by attracting visitors and establishing Hawaii as a cultural destination. A thriving symphony elevates our state's reputation on a national and international level while also providing economic benefits to local businesses and arts organizations.

For all these reasons, I strongly urge you to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official State Orchestra of Hawaii. Doing so will help secure the future of orchestral music in our state, ensuring that generations of students and community members continue to benefit from its artistic, educational, and cultural contributions.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Nikki Ebisu

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 6:15:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 SB 441 Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) . Please pass this bill this session to provide the recognition as our state symphony orchestra and the financial support to HSO's statewide outreach to all our islands' youth and communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 441.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 9:51:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB441, which would designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the “State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra” and provide essential funding for its operations. As both a longtime patron and a new member of the HSO team, I have experienced firsthand the profound impact this organization has on our community.

My family’s connection to the HSO began in 2020, when we were able to stream the orchestra’s performances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even from our home, the artistry and dedication of the musicians were undeniable. This experience inspired us to become Masterworks series subscribers in 2021, and attending live concerts quickly became an invaluable way for us to share in the power of symphonic music.

For my daughter, these experiences were especially meaningful. As a young musician in school, it was important to me to encourage her to engage with symphonic music not only as a listener but as someone who could experience its magic up close - meeting professional musicians, witnessing their artistry, and understanding their vital role in our cultural landscape. The HSO provided her with unparalleled opportunities to deepen this connection. She had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of conducting the orchestra at a concert at the Waikīkī Shell, later interned with the HSO for a school project, and continued her involvement as a volunteer after graduating high school. Today, she is pursuing music as part of her college studies; a testament to the inspiration and encouragement she received through the HSO.

The impact of the HSO extends far beyond the concert hall. The orchestra’s musicians are not just world-class performers, they are dedicated educators, mentors, and community leaders who enrich our schools, guide young artists, and foster a lifelong appreciation for music across generations. The HSO serves as a cultural pillar of Hawai‘i, uniting our diverse communities through music and ensuring that the arts remain a vibrant part of our islands.

It is with this deep appreciation for the HSO’s role in Hawai‘i’s artistic and educational landscape that I felt compelled to join its staff. I believe that the success of this organization is critical to our state—not only for the preservation and promotion of the arts but for the enrichment of all who call Hawai‘i home.

I urge you to support SB441 and invest in the future of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, ensuring that it can continue to inspire, educate, and connect our community for generations to come.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 11:28:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support this action to establish the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the official state symphony, and to fund it appropriately. The HSO is a vital piece of Hawaii's art community, and a wonderful resource to expose children and the community to the beauty of music.

In a time when so many institutions are under attack, I would be proud for Hawaii to lead the way in asserting that the arts are necessary to our beautiful community, and that the HSO is a vital piece of that community. Steady funding would also allow HSO to reach out to schools, children, and other community resources who may not have had the chance to hear this kind of music. I want to live in a community that nurtures art, artists, and commits to grounding the arts within our lives.

Sincerely,

Jen Baker

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 11:47:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I have attended the symphony since the 1970's. It is brought joy to the lives of family and friends. It is an essential part of our lives and deserves to be recognized by the state. So many symphonies have lost support, ours is gaining support because the people love it. We have a treasure, please make it official. Thank you.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 12:47:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra (Maitri) Carmichael	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! My family and I love the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra and attend all their major performances. Having the designation as the official state symphony would solidify its position in our community and help it continue to uplift us all with inspiring music. The music has helped some of my family members through very difficult times. I have never submitted testimony before, but this was important enough to me - I wholeheartedly support this bill. Mahalo! Maitri :)

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 12:47:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

It isn't a city until it has its own Symphony Orchestra.



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 12:49:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

We attend a number of the concerts of the Hawaii Symphony. They, like the Royal Hawaaian Band, provide some of the most enjoyable music that we can hear in Hawaii. There are many Rock, Raggae, Jazz, Island and Hawaiian Music Groups in Hawaii. There is only one Royal Hawaiian Band and one Hawaii Symphony and we need to preserve these precious types of Music Art out here in the middle of the Ocean.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 1:41:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a long time resident, subscriber, supporter and donor to the HSO - from Honollulu Symphony days to Hawaii Symphony days - the HSO provides the highest quaiity of professional music and education programs throughout the State of Hawaii.

I support SB441.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 3:29:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB 441

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:54:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a State Capitol city, Honolulu MUST have a high quality symphony orchestra (which it currently does) in order to maintain its qualifications as a place where educated, discerning citizens want to live -- despite the high cost of living here. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is currently very successful, but in past years funding issues have put it in peril - or interrupted its operation. I strongly support this bill to strengthen the backing of our extremely worthy Symphony Orchestra.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:56:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 increase interest in classical music and more. 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. Hawaii needs HSO more than ever and let's give them our support now. Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Mahalo,  
Michelle

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 3:12:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Please support SB 441 to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) and to require annual reports to the Legislature.

I strongly support the HSO and have donated money to this organization for several years. I'm so glad Hawaii has a great, dedicated symphony orchestra to perpetuate classical music and to present current musical pieces. I hope the funds from the Legislature would increase opportunities for the HSO to perform in more communities.

I think supporting the HSO through funding would demonstrate that this state cares about enriching the lives of the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:20:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I applaud the initiative to subsidize the HSO as one of our State treasures. The HSO has heretofore relied almost solely on private citizens who understand the value of music and musicians to our community. The impact of the orchestra extends far beyond the concert-goers alone. One need only look to the work of the orchestra through COVID in raising the spirits of our community.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:22:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support SB441 to designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra with appropriate and continued funding. HSO is a cultural and educational treasure in Hawaii and it is important and appropriate to broaden State support for its mission and performances for our community.

Thank you.



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:34:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and WAM Members,

To say that the The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Dane Lam is one of the world's finest orchestras, is no overstatement. To have this jewel proudly representing our State, (just as the Royal Hawaiian Band proudly represents the City & County of Honolulu), would also be a testament to Hawaii's commitment to music education for our children. I humbly ask for your support of SB 441. Thank you very much.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 11:59:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra is not only a world class orchestra, but it offers so many things to this community such as more than 50 diverse annual concerts that includes free park and outdoor community concerts, free educational concerts, their Na Hoku Opio program that has young starts compete to showcase their talents, side by side projects with the Hawaii Youth Symphony as well as, the Hapa Symphony Series that combines the talents of Hawaii legendary musicians with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight! The organization also commissions new works by living composers from around our Pacific Region, embracing our geography as a Pacific Orchestra and uniting the state's most important arts organizations under one umbrella in our groundbreaking Beethoven 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 education our children. It is essential to always platform our amazing Hawaii Symphony Orchestra in as many ways as we can.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 4:50:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am fully in support of making the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra the official State Symphony and be able to procure state funding. I have been involved with the Symphony and supported them for more than 20 years and have had to see them struggle to receive support from the state. The Blaisdell was built for the Symphony and still it has struggled to be able to perform there. The musicians have encouraged and taught many young musicians over the years who are now playing in other exceptional orchestras. WE now have an exciting Conductor again after many well known in the past and hope that we can support the Symphony to keep the quality musicians we need to continue.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:44:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 441

Aloha Chair and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

As an independent filmmaker, I know how vital the arts are to our community. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra isn't just about music—it's about storytelling, culture, and shared experiences that connect us all. HSO brings world-class performances to our islands, inspiring both artists and audiences alike.

Supporting SB 441 means ensuring that Hawai'i's only professional symphony continues to thrive and reach more people. I urge you to invest in the future of the arts in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Jinyoung Lee

Now Production Films

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:00:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support SB441. Hawaii needs to have a flourishing symphony for all its people from our young to those of us who are getting on in years. We are so far from the rest of the world, yet having a vibrant symphony helps keep us connected within our shared culture.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:03:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a vibrant part of our community, bringing over 50 diverse concerts each year from Masterworks performances to HapaSymphony collaborations with local legends like Robert Cazimero and Jake Shimabukuro.

We go beyond the concert hall with free park concerts, youth programs, and educational initiatives like *Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds*. Our *Nā Hōkū 'Ōpio – Young Stars* competition highlights Hawai'i's rising talent, while new commissioned works celebrate our Pacific identity.

At our core are incredible musicians who not only perform but also educate and inspire, proving that music transforms lives and strengthens communities.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 12:29:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am a resident of Mānoa Valley and believe the symphony is important and deserves increased support and funding.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 2:53:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lynne Johnson	Testifying for I am the President of the Honolulu Symphony Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii has had a tradition of symphonic music for over 120 years. You have seen statements of all the ways that the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra participates in and contributes to the culture life and well-being of our state. I would like to add to this the fact that having a Symphony Orchestra is an important economic driver as well, People like to live in city with a quality symphony orchestra, which ours indeed is. Recently, I went to an HSO concert and sat next to visitors who came to one of the Hapa concerts. They truly loved it! I also want to emphasize that symphony musicians play a key part in music education. My own daughter took violins lessons from Kathy Haphner and now my two grandchildren now take from her as well. She is a treasure. My two grandchildren recently attended the free HSO concert of Beethoven Pastoral Symphony and loved it! Music is good for our physical and mental well-being and the HSO is the most important musical entity in or our state, supporting the Hawaii Opera Theater, the Ballet, and providing the musiciians of Chamber Music Hawaii as well as serving the community at large. In conclusion, an investment in the HSO is good for the cultural. life and economics prosperity of our state as well as the health and well-being of its citizens.





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February 23, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 441

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Katie Pickman, and I am honored to serve as a board member of the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) since 2020. I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 441, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra.

For years, I have witnessed firsthand the tireless efforts of the HSO team and board to ensure the financial health and sustainability of this extraordinary institution. The dedication, passion, and resilience that fuel this organization are unmatched—it is truly a labor of love.

The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is more than an ensemble of world-class musicians; it is a cultural treasure that enriches our community in ways that cannot be measured in numbers alone. It moves people. It connects us. It speaks where words cannot.

Just last week, I attended a Beyond the Music event showcasing Beethoven's symphonies. Sitting nearby was a mother and her son, who had limited communication abilities. Yet, the moment the symphony began playing, his body instinctively moved in sync with the music, his arms soaring with joy. His mother watched with a smile that radiated pure happiness—her son had found his space of connection through music. This moment is just one of countless examples of how the HSO transforms lives, reaches across barriers, and provides an essential artistic heartbeat for our islands.

While the HSO continues to deliver exceptional performances and impactful educational opportunities, its financial sustainability remains a pressing concern. Designating HSO as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra would provide essential recognition and support to ensure that future generations can continue to experience the power of live symphonic music.

I urge the committee to pass SB 441 and stand in support of an institution that brings immeasurable value to our community. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Pickman

Board Member, Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra

General Manager, Hawaii News Now

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:30:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Music especially what the Hawaii Symphony has to offer is for me an essential part to live here on Oahu . I invited 2 weeks ago a friend of mine who never yet heard the Hawaii Symphony and she was in awe and shared afterwards, that it was one of the most beautiful evening she had in a very long time and she felt it even shiften her sadness that she carried for a while to a place of surrender and peace . That to me is what Music does to our soul and this should be supported without questioning.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:57:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexander F Kufel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra alone fills an important part of my life by providing a varied program of classical and contemporary live music that satisfies my senses in a way that no other medium can do. The orchestra itself is made up of gifted and talented musicians, each of whom could provide an outstanding solo performance, as well as the innovative leadership of Dane Lam and the remarkable composer in residence Michael Thomas Foumai. Taken together they create a sound that is among the finest possible by anyone, anywhere. In these transitional times where so much is virtual rather than real the orchestra deserves the full support of not only Hawaii's citizens but of the State itself. Recognition as the State of Hawaii Orchestra will help secure its future and is the honor it deserves. Sincerely, Alexander Kufel

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:55:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Our well-known symphony orchestra will not only bring pride to our state, it can also bring in tourists and income. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has been promoting the unique musicians who have devoted themselves to the survival and advancement of this excellent orchestra for many decades. Many of us help with small donations to maintain the orchestra and keep the pride of our state. Some businesses also contribute funding in recognition of the significance of the orchestra for our community, tourism, and state.

Classical music is not a luxury. Scientific research demonstrates that classical music substantially contributes to a healthy mind and body, and that includes for many of our citizens. It also helps the development of the young, especially in mathematics, and it helps the elderly with memory.

The investment of the state in funding the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra will give back to the state in promoting tourism, education of the young in Hawaii, and healthy elderly living.

Kindly support the SB 441 to generously fund the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:02:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephen A. Tajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB441 to make the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) truly represents the State of Hawaii as it provides residents and visitors alike with superb live music of all genres from classical to pop to Hawaiian to ethnic. HSO provides music exposure and education to our keiki with free educational concerts, Na Hoku Opio Young Stars competition and support for the Hawaii Youth Symphony. It is the only symphonic orchestra with its origin in Hawaii which represents the State in the world of symphonic music. HSO is Hawaii's orchestra and SB441 will help ensure it's future. Please Malama HSO. Mahalo!

Stephen A. Tajima

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:42:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Anna Lenhart. In 2018, I moved to Hawai'i after winning the symphony's principal horn audition. I brought with me 15 years of training from world renowned musical institutions.

Like many young musicians, I saw Hawai'i as a short-term job, a small steppingstone on the path to a larger, well-funded orchestra.

But Hawai'i deserves better than being a rotating door for upcoming musicians.

By designating the HSO as the State of Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, you are enabling highly trained musicians to stay.

To stay for the quiet keiki who find their voice through music.

To stay for the kapuna who sing along to our Christmas carols at their retirement centers.

To stay for the woman who whispered an awestruck "wow" into the silence after we finished a Beethoven symphony.

To stay and build community.

With our current resources, we can't provide our soul-healing music to everyone who needs it.

SB441 will enable us musicians to not only stay in Hawai'i but to expand our influence to neighbor islands and underserved communities.

Thank you for helping us help your constituents.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:02:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

The arts are critical to our state and the future of Hawaii. I strongly support SB 441. It is critical to designate HSO as the official State orchestrectra and appropriately fund it.

I attend monthly events and know these are enriching to all ages and backgrounds living here in Hawaii. Also these performances are critical to keeping the Hawaiian culture alive and approachable.

Mahalo,

Gwen

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:32:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB441 with all my heart. The Hawaii Symphony, of which I have been a dedicated member for nearly 40 years, has earned and deserves the recognition and strong support this bill would bring.

The Symphony benefits our community in many important ways. It provides a wide variety of performances and educates our young musical talent. As an arts organization, it is an essential part of the local economy, providing many jobs directly as well as indirectly through the ripple effect. The organization brings together many different segments of the community in various collaborative projects. It is also a reflection of the rich and unique culture of Hawaii in a way that no other organization can. It is made up of professional musicians who are active in the community in many beneficial ways beyond playing for the Symphony, such as playing chamber music, jazz and other music styles, as well as providing private music lessons, coachings at schools, etc.

I remember when the Symphony was a 42-week season and toured the neighbor islands every season, presenting full orchestra concerts and small ensemble educational programs in schools. I hope that this bill will help us be able to expand our season and return to regular touring, fulfilling our mission of serving the entire state.

Again, I strongly support SB441 and I hope that this will help ensure the future of the HSO for years to come.

Norm Foster, Second/E-flat Clarinet, Hawaii Symphony



Testimony on SB441 RE: The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra

Feb 24, 2025

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

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

Another event was the last public performance by Rosemary Clooney on a HSO Pops Concert. I wrote about it, along with other factors that prove the Hawai'i Symphony's worth, in this excerpt from my book:

From *The Arts from the Bottom Up*, pg. 395-397  
Marsha Schweitzer

**To the Editor: On "Does Honolulu Need the Symphony?"**

*Midweek*

Every five years or so somebody dredges up that tired old question again, "Does Honolulu need the symphony?" I thought everybody had already heard the question and already knew the obvious answer. At first I said to myself, why bother to answer this lame question yet again? But then, maybe the columnist who asked the question this time, and perhaps a few others, have been asleep and haven't gotten the word. So here it is.

The columnist asks "whether donors' and taxpayers' monies would be better spent on other social enterprises," and "might we be better off if that symphony donor money went straight into music programs in our schools?" These are meaningless questions, because there are no other social enterprises that address the community need that the symphony does or that could fill the niche of the symphony.

And while school music programs can certainly use money, we are talking apples and oranges here. The objectives of the symphony and of school music programs are not the same, not even close. The symphony exists to present concerts; it serves the entire community, not just school students, and although it does present educational programs, it is not an educational institution, it is an arts institution. By the same token, although school music groups occasionally present public performances as part of the educational process, they exist to serve the students, not the public; schools are not arts institutions, they are educational institutions.

Let me illustrate the value of arts institutions with the Honolulu Symphony's Grammy-nominated CD of its concert with the late Rosemary Clooney. The CD was an archive of a Honolulu Symphony Pops concert, part of the regular pops series that takes place every few weeks on the Blaisdell

Center stage, part of the symphony's ongoing public service mission. It was a magical concert, which ended with a dying Clooney saying, "Thank you for one of the best nights of my life."

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

For that reason, government funding is not just necessary, it is desirable, because it is important that the orchestra be owned by all the people, not just by the moneyed elite, so that all of us can claim a piece of the symphony and share common responsibility for it. If the costs of the symphony are shared broadly over our entire population in the form of donations, ticket purchases, and taxpayer subsidies, each person's burden of keeping the symphony healthy and flourishing is light. Cities that understand this principle have orchestras that have survived much worse trouble than the Honolulu Symphony has ever seen, and have thrived even in the face of occasional deficits.

A CD is not a substitute for live music. Ask any restaurateur if his clientele responds the same way to Musak as to a live band. A recording of a musician's work is like a videotape of a dancer, or a photograph of a painting. It is a categorically different experience from a live concert and cannot replace the real thing. And there is another thing that cannot be replaced: The Honolulu Symphony has created over its 100-year history hundreds of original works and arrangements of Hawaiian music that would not now exist if the Honolulu Symphony did not exist. We have a library of arrangements by legendary Hawaii musicians like former Royal Hawaiian Bandmaster Lloyd Krause and local Filipino composer Angel Peña, as well as orchestral arrangements to accompany virtually all of our great Hawaiian musicians, from Don Ho to the Farden family to the Brothers Cazimero and Keali'i Reichel.

The arts are businesses, with all the same positive economic and societal impacts as other businesses. We need the symphony (and the Royal Hawaiian Band, and the Hawaii Opera Theater, and the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and Diamond Head Theater, and all the other arts) for the same reasons that we need banks, airlines, stores, restaurants, hospitals, schools, and all other enterprises that make our lives happier, healthier, and more satisfying.

Advocacy for the arts is one of the few social issues that enjoys true bi-partisan support. A belief in the value of the arts and a history of generosity in their support is shared across the sociopolitical spectrum. The arts help everyone and hurt no one. So what's the problem?

Marsha Schweitzer  
905 Spencer St 404  
Honolulu HI 96822  
808-531-6617

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:03:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 a wonderful bill. It provides residents and visitors statewide with untold opportunities to appreciate music in many forms as they attend live concerts, some of them free of charge. Guest artists come from around the world, as well as Hawaii nei. In addition, the Symphony commissions new works by living composers from the Pacific. Please move this bill forward.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:31:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this local cultural resource. I take lessons from one of the Symphony cellists.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:07:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
JEFFREY LIM, M.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) provides the Hawaii community with more than the opportunity to experience live the vast tapestry of the symphonic repertoire. This organization provides essential outreach and educational opportunities that have cultural impact across the spectrum of our State's demographics. Its Hapa Concert Series has broad appeal, with its support and showcasing of premiere local talent and culture. Through its Na Hoku Opio youth competition, HSO encourages instrumental excellence in Hawaii's young musicians and the once-in-a-lifetime thrill of performing with and being supported by a full orchestra. My son benefitted from this experience and it played an integral role in his life journey toward his current position as violinist with HSO. But I believe perhaps the most important benefit of HSO is the body of excellent musicians it assembles permanently in the islands. Collectively, the HSO musicians, as an embedded workforce, provide the backbone for music education and enrichment for our state. The individual impact of each of these musicians through their teaching and educational efforts, inspiring performances, and the musical experimentation and curiosity they promote throughout our community is priceless.

Please do everything you can to support this marvelous cultural asset for our community. The symphony not only perform standard literature beautifully, but they also commission new works and have an educational outreach program to the schools. Being an amateur cellist, I have taken advantage of lessons from one of the symphony cellists.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:26:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB 441, which would designate the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I joined the HSO in 2004, and some of my favorite experiences have been during outreach efforts that really underscored that we were serving the whole state of Hawaii: making weekly trips to Nānākuli to work with elementary school students, and then welcoming them to Blaisdell Concert Hall to make music with us; playing for a packed house in a Hilo community concert led by Aaron Mahi; playing school shows on neighbor islands for students who had never seen a violin up close.

The HSO has strong artistic and executive leadership in place who are committed to expanding our reach in the community through free concerts, collaborations with other arts organizations, and concert series that showcase local talent, but my colleagues and I would like to do even more. Now called the Hawaii Symphony, we have both the desire and the kuleana to live up to that name, to demonstrate that we are Hawaii's orchestra. SB 441 would help make that possible, and so I ask for your support of this bill.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:36:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

We're proud of all we offer at HSO, such as:

- More than 50 diverse concerts annually
- Free park and outdoor community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests
- 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 Series that combines the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Robert Cazimero, Jake Shimabukuro and Raitea Helm with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight
- 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
- 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 education our children
- Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies to with vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:08:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

**Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 441: Relating to the Hawai‘I Symphony Orchestra**

Dear Senate Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Honorable Members,

I am a dedicated music lover and arts donor, and I am submitting this testimony today supporting the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra (HSO).

Soon after I arrived in Honolulu in 1988 from Boston, Mass., I located the arts groups that would provide the cultural stimulation I was used to accessing on the East Coast, and was happy to learn that our local Symphony was first-rate.

It is obvious that the orchestra performs symphonic works and pops music with renowned soloists and compelling conductors and performs a series of youth education concerts. In addition to its own multiple concert series, the Symphony provides the incredible live musical accompaniment for the Opera, Ballet Hawaii, and visiting performers. Imagine what these performances would be like with pre-recorded music or only a solo musician.

The accomplished Symphony musicians teach more than 600 local students in private lessons, and play with a variety of ensembles, including the Royal Hawaiian Band, Chamber Music Hawai‘i and serve churches and temples of all faiths around the islands with their musical gifts. Symphony members lead music teacher associations, create world-class musical seminars and festivals, and teach in formal education settings throughout Hawai‘i, benefiting thousands of children.

The influence and enrichment that the orchestra to our residents and visitors are apparent in many segments of cultural life. The organization deserves to be maintained as a cultural resource through state funding. Ticket sales and donations alone do not provide 100% support any major cultural group - whether here in Hawai‘i or in New York City. As a professional grants writer, I know how challenging it is to secure annual operating funds for the arts, especially for an organization with our Symphony's scope, engagement and impact within the community.

The Senate has the power to move forward this bill that will help insure the fiscal stability of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra. For more than 100 years, the HSO has been a leader in mingling

Eastern and Western music on concert stages around the state, and its musicians are essential to bring music education to our keiki.

The HSO deserves our financial support and I hope you will hear my voice and move this bill forward. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

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

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:31:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

As season subscribers for many years, my wife Amy and I value the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as a precious jewel of this state's performing arts scene. In addition to the high-quality performances across multiple musical genres, the HSO's members serve as the base for music education and training to enrich the lives of our keiki and plant the seeds of future performers. The official recognition and support embodied in this bill are proper acknowledgment of the key role HSO plays in our state's cultural life. We urge its passage.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:51:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Houglum	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Daniel Houglum

Regarding Hawaii Symphony Bill SB 441

2-24-25

My name is Daniel Houglum and I am a composer, pianist, and music educator currently living on Maui, after living on O‘ahu for 10 years. I’ve earned a PhD in Music Composition and have taught in the UH System. I know the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra musicians and organization well, having in the past worked there full-time managing the musicians, organizing international auditions, and composing original orchestral works and POPS orchestra arrangements for numerous local artists.

HSO holds immense value to the State, to students across Hawai‘i, ‘ohana, adjacent industries, and to me as a professional musician and father of two children. I’m offering strong support for SB 441, which proposes to make HSO the State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra with funding allocation over two years. The impact of State support for a high caliber professional orchestra ripples out far beyond what the public at-large sees, primarily performances of great masterworks.

In an increasingly connected world where people feel more disconnected than ever, institutions like the HSO create important physical space for people to come together and share live experiences, feel emotions together in real-time. This seems almost radical in today’s wired-but-apart existence. I implore us to cherish the HSO as something special to protect and nurture in a quickly changing world, where the orchestra draws upon its history, lives in the present, and looks to the future. My family, friends, and their keiki on Maui would love to experience the magic of HSO at the MACC -- hopefully soon!

Thank you for reading my mana‘o and for your consideration. There are many more points of interest to share, so please free to contact me for further information or details about my support.

Mālama pono,

Daniel Houglum



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 4:31:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Saul	Testifying for Hawaii Symphony Orchestra	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We're proud of all we offer at HSO, such as:

- More than 50 diverse concerts annually
- Free park and outdoor community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests
- 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 Series that combines the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Robert Cazimero, Jake Shimabukuro and Raitea Helm with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight
- 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
- 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 education our children
- Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies to with vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 4:41:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jordan Schifino	Testifying for Hawaii Symphony Orchestra	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We're proud of all we offer at Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, such as:

More than 50 diverse concerts annually

Free park and outdoor community concerts

Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests

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 Series that combines the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Robert Cazimero, Jake Shimabukuro and Raitea Helm with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight

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

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 education our children

Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies to with vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion

This orchestra has the opportunity to serve more of the island community with numerous outreach opportunities. Education through art, specifically music, can nurture and advance ourselves individually and as a community.



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:44:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am proud of all our HSO has to offer, such as:

- More than 50 diverse concerts annually
- Free park and outdoor community concerts
- Free education concerts including Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawai'i Forests
- 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 Series that combines the talents of Hawai'i's most revered musicians including Robert Cazimero, Jake Shimabukuro and Raitea Helm with the power of a symphony orchestra in full flight
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- Sharing live symphonic music that has been linked in numerous studies to with vastly improved academic performance, better outcomes for young people, and increased social cohesion

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:45:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Esteemed Legislators, Honorable Chairs Dela Cruz and Moriwaki and our Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

SB441 represents an important acknowledgement for arts in our community. Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra provides much more for our community than extraordinary concerts—they keep music education accessible for our keiki and ensure appreciation for works by Pacific artists throughout our state. HSO is the most isolated symphony orchestra in the world, requiring more effort to activate audiences as supporters than symphony orchestras in the continental U.S. and throughout the globe. They also rise to the responsibility of championing musical works for a region of the world that spans nearly 1/3 of the globe. Their commitment to Pacific artists—those who perform more than 50 concerts a year with HSO as well as those composing new music in Polynesia, Oceania and Asia—reinforces how art unites us in experience, culture and history. Were it not for HSO, many of our most talented musicians would struggle to find stages to share the passion and interpretation for works of extraordinary significance, whether new and inspiring pieces like those HSO has commissioned or legacy works by artists such as Beethoven, Bach and Barber that continue to influence young artists today. Furthermore, it's those young artists in our islands benefit the most from having a state symphony. HSO musicians are mentors and teachers to Hawai‘i's student musicians—in our schools, as private tutors and through professional performance opportunities like the Nā Hōkū ‘Ōpio Young Stars competition and side-by-side concerts with Hawai‘i Youth Symphony. This kind of exposure for emerging artists gives confidence to the next generation of musicians and shapes our youth for careers as maestros, virtuosos and storytellers we'll be honored to say cultivated their talent here at home.

Our state places such extraordinary value on the preservation of our arts and culture as part of the anthology of our islands and exposition of our unique perspective within the world. Designating a State Symphony helps ensure our musical narratives remain a part of our future. We hope you, too, see the lasting benefit of granting Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra this meaningful designation.

With sincere aloha for your support for the arts,

Sitarani Crevier

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:52:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support SB 441, which designates the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the State of Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra and provides funding for its operations. The orchestra has served our community for over a century, enriching Hawai‘i’s cultural life and providing vital music education to students across the state.

This bill ensures stable funding for the orchestra’s operations, maintenance, and educational programs, including free access for public school students and teachers. Without state support, the orchestra’s ability to continue these programs is at risk.

A strong symphony benefits everyone. It strengthens our arts community, supports local musicians, and ensures future generations have access to high-quality music education. I urge you to pass SB 441 and invest in Hawai‘i’s cultural future.

Thank you for your consideration.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MENAS

The Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2025

Hearing Date and Time: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 10:03 AM

Re: **SB 441 RELATING TO THE HAWAII SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Written Testimony Only

CHAIR DELA CRUZ, VICE CHAIR MORIWAKI, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

My name is Lloyd Lim and I am testifying in my individual capacity in strong support of SB 441 providing funding to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO). 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 Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the St. Louis Symphony. I feel as if I have a basis for comparison.

Many of the orchestra musicians are also music teachers in our community helping to raise our kids. I dropped out of the piano as a kid and turned to the clarinet before taking up piano again after high school. How I wish I had kept at the piano as a kid. My brain would have developed better and faster and I would have been far better prepared for college, graduate school, law school and my career.

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 effect on the development of verbal skills.

I have gone to many HSO concerts and I 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 orchestra 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. Classical music used to be for aristocrats, snobs (let's face it), but with YouTube it is no longer. Ideally, the richest people in Hawaii should contribute to HSO. But how can we ask them to be donors, if the State government won't take up the leadership position?

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

*Lloyd Lim*

Lloyd Lim, 1525 Wilder Ave #1008, Honolulu, HI 96822, [Lloydlim600bach@aol.com](mailto:Lloydlim600bach@aol.com)

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:26:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Yoo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Strong Support of SB441**

Hawaii State Legislature

Lauren Yoo

February 22, 2025

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Hawaii State Capitol

**Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,**

I am writing to express my **strong support** for SB441, which designates the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HSO) as the official State Symphony Orchestra and provides essential funding for its programs. As a community leader, I have witnessed firsthand how HSO enriches our community through music education, cultural preservation, and economic contributions.

**HSO's Impact on Music Education and Community Outreach**

HSO plays a vital role in bringing music education and symphonic experiences to communities across Hawai'i. Through school programs, free public performances, and mentorship initiatives, HSO reaches thousands of students who may not otherwise have access to live classical music.

Many of HSO's musicians serve as educators, working with the Hawai'i Youth Symphony and local schools to nurture the next generation of musicians. HSO's community engagement programs introduce young students to orchestral music, inspiring discipline, creativity, and collaboration. Without adequate funding, these opportunities could disappear, depriving Hawai'i's youth of the lifelong benefits that music education provides.

**Collaborations with Local Artists**

HSO actively collaborates with Hawaiian, jazz, opera, and choral musicians, highlighting the rich diversity of our state’s musical traditions. Notable partnerships include performances with:

- **Robert Cazimero** – Esteemed Hawaiian musician and kumu hula
- **Raiatea Helm** – Renowned Hawaiian vocalist
- **Jake Shimabukuro** – World-famous ‘ukulele virtuoso
- **Keola Beamer** – Hawaiian slack-key guitar legend
- **The Mākaha Sons** – Celebrated Hawaiian music group
- **O‘ahu Choral Society** – Prominent symphonic chorus
- **Hawai‘i Opera Theatre** – Hawai‘i’s premier opera company

These collaborations bridge genres, preserving and celebrating Hawai‘i’s cultural identity while offering one-of-a-kind musical experiences to both residents and visitors.

### **Economic and Cultural Significance**

Supporting HSO is an investment in Hawai‘i’s economy and tourism industry. The arts attract cultural tourists who seek authentic experiences beyond the beaches, positioning Hawai‘i as a symphonic destination akin to Vienna or New Orleans.

Other symphony orchestras have demonstrated substantial economic impact:

- The Dallas Symphony Orchestra generated over \$107 million for its local economy in a single year.
- A study from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra found that every \$1 invested in their orchestra generates a \$4 return to the regional economy, demonstrating an almost 4:1 return on investment ([Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Study](#)).

HSO’s performances support local jobs, businesses, and tourism-related industries, strengthening Hawai‘i’s economic resilience while enhancing its global cultural reputation.

### **A Call to Action**

Passing SB441 ensures that all students and communities in Hawai‘i—regardless of socioeconomic status—continue to have access to the arts.

The Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra is more than just a performance ensemble; it is a **cultural institution**, an **economic asset**, and an **educational resource** that serves our entire state. I

strongly urge the committee to support SB441 to ensure the future of symphonic music in Hawai'i for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Hawai'i's arts, education, and economy.

**Sincerely,**

Lauren Yoo

Community Leader

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:42:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne L.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I strongly support** SB441 which seeks to establish HSO as the State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra

I am a parent of two young children who are very active in the music community here. My husband and I feel very fortunate to be able to raise our kids here in Hawaii and surround them with encouraging and inspiring teachers, coaches and role models, many of whom are HSO members. We also enjoy attending the HSO concerts as a family and hope we will be able to continue doing so for many years to come.

As someone who first learned how to play the violin at a beginning orchestra class at a Hawaii public school, I also commend the bill's goal of providing more access and outreach to students and communities all over the State by establishing a state symphony. Whatever their burdens may be, music can help lighten people's hearts. Our government's support for a State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra should be considered an integral and crucial part of helping to improve the overall quality of life for all Hawaii residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Anne L.



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:45:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aris Doike	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha! My name is Aris Doike, born and raised in Hawaii, an alumnus of Moanalua High School, and currently a cellist with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra enriches our community by attracting and retaining exceptional musicians, who not only provide us with beautiful music but also nurture the musical talents of Hawaii's youth. I am a direct beneficiary of the Orchestra's invaluable presence.**

**My own journey began with two inspiring mentors, both cellists with the Honolulu Symphony. Their professional expertise and guidance were instrumental in shaping me as both a musician and an individual. During my high school years, I was fortunate to win the Youth Talent Pool Competition (a precursor to the Na Hoku Opio Young Stars Competition), which offered the incredible opportunity to perform a solo with the Hawaii Symphony. This unforgettable experience was a pivotal step on the path that led me to pursue a career in music and ultimately fulfill my dream of joining my hometown orchestra. While not every student will pursue a career in music, every student deserves the transformative experience of hearing a professional orchestra and learning from expert musicians.**

**My story is just one example of the profound impact the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra has on our community. I hope it effectively conveys the breadth and depth of that impact. I wholeheartedly support SB441 and am deeply committed to ensuring that future generations have access to similar life-changing opportunities.**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:52:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
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 HSO 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 these 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; its beauty will transform the lives of generations to come.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:14:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

February 24, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB 441  
Relating to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 26, 2025

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,  
I am writing in support of SB 441 which designates the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. I can offer perspectives as an active community member and supporter of the arts in Hawaii – as a Board Member of the Hawaii Symphony Board Foundation and of Chamber Music Hawaii; as the mother of the CEO and President of Hawaii Youth Symphony and whose son and daughter-in-law are professional musicians and for the HSO and for other music entities, and both who are active music educators in our community.

In sum, the State of Hawaii should be proud to be recognized as a state showing pride in its symphony with the designation of Hawaii’s State Symphony Orchestra. I believe such recognition:

- Elevates the status of the HSO and will support attracting virtuosi, guest conductors and contribute to the overall cultural landscape of our state;
- Promotes future partnerships that will bring honor to our state.
- Provides hope to our student musicians who see music as their passion and future profession knowing that there would be a support system and recognition in place for our homegrown orchestra
- Demonstrates the State’s deep belief in the role of the arts in the health and well-being of our community
- Supports our local musicians and local talent
- Fortifies and lends credibility in educational outreach showing our state government’s care for support of music learning for all our student learners

- Can boost local tourism and hospitality having an official state orchestra

The HSO has proven its value and asset to our State. It provides more than 50 diverse concerts annually; extends access with free outdoor community concerts; supports local composers, features young local musicians and programming that preserves Hawaiian culture; and its musicians are the key music educators of our state, just to name a few

The HSO is one of many arts organizations that have proven its value and asset to our State. Hawaii is fortunate as there are many other worthy, separate organizations that should also be remembered when it comes to state funding, such as the Hawaii Youth Symphony—which specializes in music education, and Chamber Music Hawaii.

These organizations partner with HSO and are led by musicians who work in HSO. A state designation would be an important step in ensuring the profound role that the HSO and its musicians has in shaping our cultural identity and preserves our Hawaiian musical traditions and stories through music.

Without doubt, the state designation of Hawaii's State Symphony Orchestra would connect and unify our community.

Mahalo and I urge support of SB 441.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:17:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

The presence of a symphony orchestra in a community is good for business as many companies do not wish to

locate to communities that do not have an orchestra.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:54:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelsey Ann Kimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As the only professional orchestra in the state, the Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is a cornerstone of the performing arts, attracting and employing many local musicians. Many of these musicians not only perform in the HSO. Many are teachers and serve as the foundation for music education. The HSO is essential to inspiring the next generation of musicians. Without the HSO, the quality of school music programs would decline as students would not have the adequate support to thrive in their arts programs.

I support SB 441 because the passing of the bill would be the next step towards grow the reach of the HSO - school visits, expanded partnerships, and innovative programming. The HSO is the paragon of musical excellence in our islands, and its presence fosters the growth of the arts.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:12:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a viola player in the HSO for over 35 years, I look back with satisfaction and joy at the concerts we have performed. I am particularly pleased to have been part of the orchestra at a time when state funding allowed us to travel to the all the neighbor islands, either with the whole orchestra or with educational ensembles. When I joined the orchestra, it was the shining example of a truly special ideal that most orchestras never achieve: to serve the entire state. We had received an award for being the best educational program in the U.S., and every child in school in the state got to hear the orchestra and its musicians at least once every two years, though many heard us much more often. There were educational concerts that filled the Blaisdell Concert Hall, and HSO educational ensembles that visited schools on every island. Our Ohana series brought to the concert hall fun and educational performances for the whole family.

I am proud of the work that our organization does today. With the appointment of our energetic and brilliant Music Director Dane Lam, we can feel the audience excitement in the air at concerts. I write this in the middle of our Beethoven Festival, where we are playing, for the first time ever in Hawai‘i, all the symphonies of Beethoven in a single season along with intriguing works by modern composers. At last weekend’s free “Beyond the Music” concert, families came to listen and learn about Beethoven’s “Pastoral Symphony,” discovering the happiness that Beethoven took in enjoying nature and expressed in that symphony. Beethoven himself even made an appearance at the concert! Apparently he is a good friend of the HSO’s excellent composer-in-residence, Michael-Thomas Foumai.

I feel that the HSO is hitting its stride and poised to serve the whole state in an even more meaningful way. I enthusiastically urge you to support SB441. Thank you so much.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:56:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB 441, 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 orchestras in the U.S. 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. 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-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:17:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear members of the Senate's Ways and Means Committee,

We urge you to support SB 441 which shows the world that the state of Hawai'i proudly supports the work and mission of our world-class Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. The HSO's music and outreach services touch the lives of thousands of citizens from children to kupuna, throughout our beautiful state.

Sincerely,

Patricia Takemoto and Robert Morse

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 2:01:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Moffitt	Testifying for Musicians' Association of Hawaii, Local 677	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am President of the Musicians' Association of Hawaii, Local 677 and writing in strong support of SB 441. This bill would allocate funding that will allow the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra to continue to provide and expand on providing over 50 diverse concerts annually, free Park and Community concerts, free education concerts, including sending smaller groups of professional musicians into class rooms to work with students one on one, side by side productions with the Hawaii Youth Symphony students, masterworks concerts, where the HSO presents the world's greatest artists and the HAPA series where the HSO collaborates with Hawaii's most revered musicians. The HSO is the State's largest employer of professional Union musicians, who are some of this Country's finest musicians.

It is crucial to continue to strongly support the HSO so this terrific resource can be available for Hawaii's people, of all ages, for many years to come.

Thank you,

James Moffitt

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:07:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I fully support designating the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as the State Orchestra. They have diligently worked to make their music accessible to broader audiences.

For example, their free Symphony in the Park series brings communities together while offering invaluable music introduction to families who may not otherwise be introduced to this type of music. Young people in the audience are invited to come on stage as 'maestro', opening doors for further music appreciation. The joy created by these special community events is palpable.

Research continually demonstrates the positive impact music has on academic performance. Note the Orchestra's expanded educational and experiential opportunities via the Hawaii Youth Orchestra supplementing school's arts programs.

For brevity, I'm only citing a few examples of the Orchestra's impact on our island. Suffice to say they have demonstrated repeatedly their value and contribution to Hawaii's quality of life. As a Hawaii citizen, I would be proud of our legislature for a designated state orchestra, much the same as I am proud of the designation of the Royal Hawaii Band as our state band.

The gift of music - what a wonderful joy to give to the people of our state. Please vote in favor of this bill.

Mahalo

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:29:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

I respectfully ask that you please support SB 441. The Hawaii Symphony Orchestra (HSO) is such a jewel and an asset to our state that we can all be so proud of. Our dedicated and talented musicians not only entertain us from the stage, but serve our community in multiple ways, including teaching and mentoring our young people, ensuring the power of music is perpetuated. I personally know the positive impact music has in one's life.

Mahalo nui loa for your kind consideration.  
Ginny Tiu

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:38:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Submitting testimony on behalf of Joan Bennet:

Aloha Honorable Chair Tommy Waters, Vice Chair Matt Weyer, and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB441, a measure that would designate the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra as the official State Orchestra of Hawai‘i and secure critical funding for its future.

As a longtime supporter of the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra, I have seen firsthand the profound impact it has on our community. HSO is a pillar of Hawai‘i’s cultural and artistic landscape, bringing world-class music to residents across our islands. Through its free public concerts, education initiatives, and collaborations with local artists, the orchestra ensures that all people, regardless of background or location, have access to the transformative power of symphonic music.

The passing of SB441 would allow the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra to expand its impact in the community. Funding would support programs like Nā Hōkū ‘Ōpio – Young Stars, which provides young musicians in Hawai‘i with invaluable performance opportunities alongside professional artists. Additionally, HSO’s work with the Hawai‘i Youth Symphony fosters mentorship and hands-on learning, nurturing the next generation of musicians in our state.

Beyond education, HSO plays a vital role in Hawai‘i’s cultural and economic landscape. The orchestra employs some of the finest musicians in the country, many of whom dedicate their time to teaching and mentoring students. The annual Beethoven Festival brings together major arts organizations from across the state, showcasing Hawai‘i as a hub for world-class musical performances.

I truly believe that if this measure passes, it will enable Honolulu to take the next step toward becoming a world-class city—with a fully recognized, officially designated world-class orchestra. Without dedicated state support, HSO’s ability to serve our community will be significantly limited. SB441 is an opportunity to ensure that the orchestra continues to thrive and reach audiences across all islands. I urge you to support this measure and invest in the future of symphonic music in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

**Joan Bennet**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:29:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a member of the Hawaii Synphony Orchestra I support SB441. The orchestra is an integral part of the cultural community of the Hawaiian Islands. The orchestra provides more than 50 diverse concerts annually including many free community and educational performances further enriching the State.

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:53:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support sb441	



**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:58:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Wong	Testifying for Hawaii Youth Symphony	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I'm writing in support of SB 441. The Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is an invaluable resource to our community, and is an inspiration to our youth statewide.**

As you know, I am President & CEO of Hawai'i Youth Symphony, a separate organization which for sixty years has provided quality music education to keiki statewide and serves over 2,500 youth and dozens of public, home, and independent schools annually.

At HYS, our vision—A Hawai'i where Music Is A Right—**assumes a reality in which our state has a thriving HSO**, and we wholeheartedly collaborate with HSO throughout the year as we work towards this vision.

\*\*\*

On a personal note, I was born & raised here on O'ahu, and would like to take you through a bit of how HSO has played a role in my life when I was a youth, and then share how it makes a difference for today's youth in present day and looking forward to a future Hawai'i.

I was first introduced to orchestral music as a keiki, listening to HSO broadcasts on Hawaii Public Radio, later while participating in HYS and taking bass lessons from HSO musicians. As a youth, I was exposed to the high artistic standards required for professional success through access to HSO's open rehearsals, youth concerts, and meeting HSO musicians in a variety of community settings. This exposure subsequently inspired me to seek further training and higher education from institutions that HSO's professionals had attained in their college and career pathways: for example, to Tanglewood (the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), to the Kennedy Center and the National Symphony Orchestra, and later, to Boston, where I attended New England Conservatory and Harvard University to major in music performance and attain a Master's Degree in Arts in Education, respectively. **Repeated exposure to a world-class musicians inspires young people to cultivate their own personal excellence!**

Although I was the only Hawai‘i student at New England Conservatory, in Boston, I was among dozens of other Hawai‘i students who had taken private lessons from Honolulu Symphony Orchestra musicians and were regular attendees of HSO concerts. (One need not major in music in order to reap the benefits of intensive musical study.)

Among my college contemporaries were those who graduated from Moanalua, Roosevelt, Kalani, Mililani, Baldwin, Waipahu, ‘Iolani, Punahou, and more; all who had benefitted from exposure and access to the HSO back home. A unifying experience was one in which HSO musicians taught us and pushed us to be our best. As we sought our respective paths, while attending renowned colleges like MIT, Harvard, Brown, Wellesley, Smith, Boston University, and Berklee College of Music, we also entered the continent more worldly and more cultured, thanks to the unique melting pot of Hawai‘i arts & cultural institutions, which has always included the HSO.

Fast forward 30 years. I recently had a conversation with renowned industry maverick Chad Smith (former CEO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and current CEO of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), on the roles that orchestras play in developing the cultural tapestries of our communities. He articulated an idea to me of orchestras being labs/incubators, in which “radical collaboration” can take shape.

We don't need to go as far as LA or Boston to see this in action. It's already happening, right here!

I see “radical collaboration” happening daily in our hometown orchestras, HSO and HYS. There is an incredible malleability, an adaptiveness, and an instinctive passion that Hawai‘i inspires, and that both the Hawai‘i Youth Symphony and the Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra are able to capture; particularly when we work together.

In 2023, Hawai‘i Youth Symphony was recognized by the global entrepreneurship magazine Fast Company as one of the world’s Best Workplaces for Innovators. Some of the work for which we were recognized included our collaborations with HSO. Their willingness to engage with Hawai‘i Youth Symphony in Side-by-Side collaborations and the Nā Hōkū ‘Opio Young Stars competition, for example, are terrific examples of the ways they partner with us to extend very special artistic opportunities to youth.

I would also like to highlight and commend them for their efforts to build bridges between the typically-Euro-centric orchestral world with the multifaceted cultures of Hawai‘i. Their commissions of Symphony of the Hawaiian Birds and Symphony of the Hawaiian Forests, their drive to engage local artists in HAPA Symphony projects, and the new commissions of Asia-Pacific composers are all terrific steps towards breaking down the systemic barriers to appreciation and access of orchestral music in Hawai‘i. I can’t wait to see what HSO does next, and support them in every way. As arts funding diminishes for organizations of all types, I urge you to pass this bill—and also—remember to fund other organizations who are also doing important work to bring equity and access to the arts statewide.

We are lucky to have the HSO.

Mahalo,

Randy Wong

President & CEO, Hawai‘i Youth Symphony

Bassist, Hawai‘i Symphony Orchestra

**LATE**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:27:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

To Senate Ways and Means Committee

RE-SB441

Please Vote "YES" in favor of SB441` to make the "Hawaii Symphony Orchestra" our

State of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra - with funding allocation for over two years.

The HSO is comprised of highly trained, skilled and educated musicians that contribute their time and talent to providing quality musical events. These musicians assist in training our future musicians- doing a side-by-side concert yearly - offering young musicians role-modeling and a chance to perform.

I am a season subscriber and volunteer in fundraising events for the HSO- these events give me great joy and contribute to my quality of life.

The HAPA Series with the HSO - supports and highlight our talented Hawaiian musicians as well as our Composer in Residence.

Funding for the orchestra is critical and passage of SB441 will assist in providing a financial security net in continuing with having an Orchestra in Hawaii. The HSO musicians are local residents and contribute finances daily to our economy.

Please VOTE "YES" on SB441

respectfully submitted, Kathleen Doering



**LATE**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:44:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

I write in my personal capacity to express support for SB 411 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 Hawaii Symphony Orchestra ("HSO") concerts at Hawaii 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 Hawaii. HSO's presence at Hawaii 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 Ways & Means Committee advance SB 441 for further consideration this session.

Best,  
Kendrick S. Chang

**LATE**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 11:25:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

What defines a great state? How we respect and cherish our kahuna and treasure and nurture our keiki. And how we enrich the lives of everyone who lives here with the best of nature and the arts.

Our Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra is an indispensable part of bringing all genres of the performing arts together - local musicians and artists performing music unique to Hawai'i, national and international artists and musicians, to ballet and opera. The HSO musicians are indispensable teachers of their craft to our keiki

For all these reasons, it is my hope that SB 441 will become law. Thank you.

**LATE**

**SB-441**

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 5:55:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/26/2025 10:03:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a local girl -- born on Maui, grew up in Waianae, living in Honolulu. As someone who grew up playing music in church and getting private music lessons, I have seen how access to music gave me advantages in life. Especially in Hawai'i, where musical abilities seem to come naturally to the youth, we must give keiki more opportunities to hear music and to participate in music programs. Music expands the way we learn and see. It's proven that the learning of music sharpens the brain and contributes to kids doing better in school. But beyond this, having music as a more central part of our lives makes us better people, more open to the deeper treasures of being alive -- open to beauty, unity and love. With Dane Lam at the helm of the Hawaii Symphony, we have someone who gets the deepest Hawaiian values of being humble (ha'aha'a) and having aloha for the community. Having a symphony that serves all islands, not just Oahu and not just Honolulu, connects Hawai'i to not only its native music (which the symphony does beautifully), but to the best parts of musical traditions from rest of the country and the rest of the world. Music is one of the best shortcuts for understanding ourselves deeply and for understanding the world deeply. If we are ever going to help our local kids compete in the world, we need to provide them access to the deep and rich musical aesthetic only the symphony brings. Please move forward with this bill and give the Hawai'i Symphony status necessary to expand what it does for our state. The returns will be tremendous in quantifiable and unquantifiable ways. With so many things in society breaking apart all around us, consider your role in defying this. Consider how your vote can change be the change we want to see in this world.

With much respect and gratitude,

Ruth Shiroma Foster