



HONOLULU SYMPHONY

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Testimony of Thomas J. Gulick, Executive Director, Honolulu Symphony Society

For a hearing by the
City Budget Committee
Honolulu Hale
Monday, April 13, 2009, 9:00 a.m.

Bill 15 (2009): Executive Operating Budget and Program

Chair Garcia, Vice Chair Okino, and members of the City Budget Committee, as Executive Director of the Honolulu Symphony, I would like to submit this testimony in opposition to a proposed amendment to Bill 15 (2009) which seeks to reduce funding to the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts (MOCA) by \$172,500 in Fiscal Year 09-10.

The Honolulu Symphony is fully aware of the extreme economic challenges being faced by our City at this time. Despite these trying economic times, I urge this committee to weigh the decision that is before them this morning before accepting the proposed cut which would reduce MOCA's programming budget by more than 50%. This reduction would severely limit or eliminate funding to many Arts and Cultural organizations in Honolulu.

The programs funded by MOCA add significantly to the vitality of our city, leverage resources and sustain jobs in Honolulu. They provide visitors and residents the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities celebrating the unique cultural makeup of our islands, showcasing ethnic as well as traditional and contemporary art forms.

The Arts are "food for our soul." They are the living embodiment of our hopes and dreams and have the power to uplift our spirits through the most difficult experiences. Honolulu prides itself on a thriving cultural epicenter which embraces both the old and the new. At a time where there is so much uncertainty, I ask this committee not to reduce funding which supports this City's artistic and cultural lifeline.

With Aloha



Thomas J. Gulick
Executive Director

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