

**testimony****LATE**

**From:** Tom Blackburn-Rodriguez [tominmaui@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2008 5:02 PM  
**To:** testimony; FINGIA  
**Cc:** Nandana Kalupahana; Sen. Roz Baker; Rep. Joe Bertram III  
**Subject:** Testimony on South Maui Learning Ohana GIA, State Capitol Auditorium, March 12, 9 AM

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means & House Committee on Finance**

**Joint informational briefings on all grants-in-aid**

**State Capitol Auditorium**

**9:00 AM**

**March 12, 2008**

Dear Committee Chairs and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information regarding the GIA application by the South Maui Learning Ohana for planning and design funding to build a state-of-the-art educational and community facility proposed to be located at the Maui Research and Technology Park in Kihei, Maui.

The grant request is for FY 2008-2009 at \$702,700. The proposed building will house the educational programs of the Kihei Charter School, an accredited school serving grades k-12. Students are admitted each year on a lottery basis with all students of all backgrounds and academic achievement levels eligible to attend the school.

Our current enrolment is 326 students, with over 100 on the waiting list. The Kihei Charter school consists of the K-12 Virtual Academy providing a blend of home and on-site instruction and activities, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Academy, the only school in the state with a fully integrated STEM curriculum, and our successful High School Academy. Eighty percent of our graduates go directly on to higher education.

An Arts Academy for grades 7 & 8 is slated to open in August in partnership with Maui On-Stage and the Maui Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA).

Currently, the Charter school rents all facility space at a cost of over \$500,000 per year. We do not believe this is cost effective. We are on a month-to-month rental at our high school site located in an industrial area in North Kihei and could be asked to leave at any time.

The GIA grant would allow us to move forward on planning & design for the new building in a timely manner.

3/11/2008

Thank you for the opportunity to present our written testimony. If you have any questions I may be reached at 808-875-0700, or via e-mail at [gzarro\\_kiheih@yahoo.com](mailto:gzarro_kiheih@yahoo.com)

Sincerely,

Gene Zarro  
Chair, South Maui Learning Ohana  
President, Kihei Charter School Board  
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**FINGIA**

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