

[EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for the KIRC Commissioners Meeting

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Fri 2/16/2024 7:01 AM

To:KIRC.PublicTestimony <kirc.publictestimony@hawaii.gov>

Aloha e KIRC Commissioners:

Recently, I was using the back inside cover of the current newsletter to explain the benefits of supporting KIRC membership. For the first time, I noticed one of those benefits is “VIP Access to Maui Ocean Center.” That’s a pretty sweet benefit, but how does a member prove that when they show up at the admissions counter?

Every other donation-supported charity to which I belong acknowledges the membership with a “thank you” letter, which can also be used as proof of a charitable donation to the IRS, and a personalized membership card. There might be classier ones like ‘Iolani Palace with the name and expiration date printed on the laminated card, or more low-budget cards like Maui Nui Botanical Garden with the name and expiration date handwritten.

Another advertised benefit in each of the membership categories is “Subscription to Ko Hema Lamalama.” It might be more honest to say “A copy of the annual Ko Hema Lamalama,” as there hasn’t been more than one issue per year for the last two or three years.

Also, I’ve always been curious why 1) there is not an effort to get members to renew, and 2) why the tax-free Foundation doesn’t ask for money prior to annual Giving Tuesday (the Tuesday after Black Friday) like all other charitable organizations? Standing in-line for scraps from the Legislature every year seems like poor odds?

Every other membership organization to which I belong sends me an annual renewal notice [compare the total number of names of members in all categories (almost half a page a few years ago) to the meager list in the Summer 2023 issue. Why is that?] and, separately, a donation request. People would rather give money to something in which they are interested or are concerned about before giving it to the government. Why don’t we do that?

Respectfully,

Marty Martins
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