

I wish to urge the Oregon Legislature to support financial relief for small and independent movie theaters, who have been largely neglected in previous relief efforts. Financial relief for movie theaters should be viewed as 1) a moral imperative, a repayment for the sacrifice these businesses have been obliged to make for our collective safety, and 2) a wise investment in a mostly after-hours business that stimulates additional revenue in surrounding downtown night-life and hence repays dividends.

Take the Salem Cinema as an example; Salem Cinema has been a vital Salem business and cultural treasure for over three decades. Exhibiting a diverse program of international, American, and Independent movies that five Manhattan theaters together couldn't manage to equal, the Salem Cinema has more than earned the right to be granted financial support. Owner Loretta Miles has made the Salem Cinema a warm and gracious gathering place for moviegoers of all sorts, especially for anyone who values first-class big screen exhibition. The community loves her and her theater.

Beyond the theater's record of service to the community that deserves financial support, we owe small theater owners repayment for their sacrifice on our behalf, for taking the full brunt of the pandemic lockdown that deprived it utterly of revenue.

Looking past this moral obligation, self-interest guides us to support the inclusion of HB 3376 provisions into HB 5555: Small theaters like the Salem Cinema have been a proven source of spin-off, or ancillary, revenue to area businesses and to the city of Salem's coffers. Inevitably, when my wife and I and 4 or 5 of our friends attend a Salem Cinema movie, the always-provocative screening is preceded or followed by cocktails, dinner out, and lively discussion — an evening on the town. A good deal of our money that evening is spent at restaurants and bars. The National Endowment for the Arts has shown that for every dollar of public money expended on the Arts, \$24 –\$30 is returned to the community in the form of parking fees, bar tabs, restaurant purchases, and hotel lodgings. The Arts, and the Salem Cinema, stimulate downtown Salem night-life and infuse energy and spending in our local businesses. Financial help for small and independent movie theaters such as the Salem Cinema is without question a sound financial investment that every business, and every legislator, should enthusiastically support.