

February 5, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

I am writing today to express my support for SB 531.

With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which closed my business down for operations in person in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in my business suffering extensive losses and the risk of me suffering even more personally.

My business was told two different times to stop all operations of in person personal training. I lost over 60% of my business over a matter of months. I had recently expanded my business to a new location, increasing my rent and expenses. Due to the closures and the fear of people coming into my facility I have not been able to bring on hardly any new business, in actuality the new business hasn't even offset the loss of existing clients needing to cancel because of COVID-19 related income loss on their ends.

I am not absolved of my rent at the facility that I was at because I signed on a personal guarantee. I had to sell most all of my equipment to be able to make ends meet. When things settle the commercial company Pacific Northwest Properties can come after my home and my personal assets to reclaim their loss of income from me. If this is seen through, I will lose all that I have beyond just losing my business.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help small businesses like mine. Our local businesses are the life-blood of our community and our economy, especially our small and mid-sized businesses who have shouldered the greatest weight of these closures. We feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why I support SB 531.

SB 531 would allow businesses to be reimbursed for closures made during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses sacrificed their livelihoods in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses - and the jobs they provide - survive.

We hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,

Mike R. Thomas