

February 18, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

**We are writing today to express our support for SB 531.**

The Bandon Chamber of Commerce represents over 200 members who are committed growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. We support entrepreneurs and the jobs they create.

This past year has been an almost impossible and terribly difficult one for our business community. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in wide-spread changes to our daily lives, and ultimately, on our ability to do business. And, to stay in business. To be able to contribute to the state Tax revenues.

With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which shuttered many of our local businesses in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in many businesses suffering extensive losses. It meant laying off employees, losing inventory, losing customers, and for some, it meant losing their business entirely.

All businesses were closed for several months, our town was shuttered. Can you even imagine the devastation to our economy, the workers, the business folks, and those that live here because we have the ability to provide items needed in their daily lives? I am not certain anyone can until it's happened to their small community. And, then, unless it's affected you directly, you can only "feel sorry" for them.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help those businesses recover. 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 we 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.

State employees have not had to deal with this situation, they have been able to hold on to their jobs, but soon, the revenue that is NOT received from all of us paying taxes, and then what happens? More and more taxes for businesses that aren't even surviving this awfulness. We hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,

Margaret



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