



culturaladvocacycoalition

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March 3, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Co-Chairs Gomberg, Beyer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ginger Savage of Baker City, Oregon. I serve as Executive Director of Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center, a nonprofit founded in 1963 on the belief that we are a welcoming place where people meet and the arts speak. I hope you will agree with me that as our nation recovers from a global pandemic, the role of arts and culture will be a critical bridge by which people can reconnect and weave together our collective future.

I am here today as a board member of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition to testify in support of HB 5023. The Coalition represents over 350 arts, culture, heritage and humanities organizations across Oregon. It is a non-partisan advocacy group formed to ensure that all Oregonians have the opportunity to access and appreciate arts and culture in their communities. Our primary mission is to increase ongoing public investment in arts, heritage and the humanities.

HB 5023 includes funding for the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust which are the primary vehicles by which the state fosters growth and support for the state's cultural sector. Funding for the grants programs in these budgets is crucial and we urge you to provide the highest amount possible. These grants are distributed to a diverse set of arts organizations in communities small and large all across the state.

Increased state funding of cultural agencies and partners will leverage the full potential of Oregon's creative and cultural resources to attract and retain businesses, increase tourism, improve education and enrich the lives of all Oregonians.

Cuts to the grants programs will be devastating to cultural institutions. For example, my organization receives state support of only \$3000 a year on an annual budget of over \$250,000. Now is the time for a greater level of funding to ensure that dollars invested in these agencies will expand access to arts, culture, heritage and humanities programs statewide.

In this unusual year, the federal government has provided rescue dollars to our sector through the CARES Act and we are grateful to our legislative leaders for designating a significant portion of these funds to shuttered stages and venues. That lifeline, however, is not sufficient to ensure our creative community survives and thrives in service to Oregonians.

The investment you make in Oregon's creative and cultural life is critical in 2021 and will support values of equity and inclusion, promote whole person health, strengthen communities, and help attract and retain workers in an innovation economy.

Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome your questions.