

February 7, 2022

Dear Chair Lively,

As the Deputy Director of Literary Arts in Portland, Oregon, I respectfully ask for your vote to pass HB #4040 which will provide \$50 million dollars in relief to Oregon's Arts and Culture sector.

As a presenting arts organization, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been significant and have touched all parts of our programming. As an immediate response to the pandemic, Literary Arts reimagined every program with the intent that we would continue to serve, as equitably as we could, our community. We moved from in-person programming to a completely digital format for all our programs. Over the course of about 30 days, staff re-wrote curriculum, mastered new technology, learned new skills that allowed us to reach audiences sequestered in their homes, worked diligently with our partners to adapt collaborations, and did not rest until we knew our programs were functioning in supportive and empowering ways.

Our digital shift in programming created a significant loss in ticket revenue, which comprises 40% of our total revenue. Portland Arts & Lectures series subscriptions were down in 2020/2021 and we were largely unable to host additional special lecture events. The Portland Book Festival in 2020 was entirely free to attend, resulting in loss of ticket revenue from our largest public event of the year.

COVID-19 also had a major impact on event sponsorship with long-time corporate sponsors backing out for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, as well as over a dozen declines from potential sponsors. As the pandemic has continued, we have relied on our generous individual donors to step up and help fill in funding gaps.

As the pandemic continues, we continue to pivot alongside it by offering hybrid programming. We believe that literature and storytelling as art forms are inherently art forms of empathy. By continuing to offer diverse programming to our community we can bring together readers and writers of all ages and from many walks of life. By building these bridges and igniting conversations we are building a more engaged, inclusive, and empathetic community.

Thank you for your consideration to dedicate \$50 million to arts and culture in our state through HB #4040.

Sincerely,



Lydah DeBin
Deputy Director