



company members: giovanni alva, jean-luc boucherot, michael cavazos, lucille dawson, ienni green-miller, liz hayden, erin leddy, jon timm, & jonathan walters

Representative John Lively, Chair  
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity  
900 Court Street, NE, HR D  
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: In support of HB 4040 to save Oregon's cultural sector

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the Committee:

Hand2Mouth Theatre's company of artists respectfully ask for your vote to pass HB #4040 which will provide \$50 million dollars in relief to Oregon's Arts and Culture sector.

In June of 2020 Hand2Mouth Theatre was forced to vacate our creative space of over ten years, Shout House. We laid off over 50 Artists and Teaching Artists whose livelihood and financial stability comes from the ability to create and produce unique live performance pieces and teach in afterschool programming throughout the state of Oregon. The fluctuation of the in-person (Live Performance) mandates have made it difficult to project stable opportunities for our artists and teachers. We have continued to pursue expanding and reintroducing our afterschool education programming for marginalized and underserved youth - moving to a digital format in Spring of 2020 - and in person programs beginning Summer of 2021. However, the loss of teachers and rise in COVID variants has made these opportunities for youth incredibly unstable and are often eliminated. In addition, our leadership took pay cuts and leave and without the support of the federal government, Hand2Mouth Theatre would not have survived.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extraordinary impact on cultural organizations and venues in our region. According to the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, 94 percent of arts organizations and music venues across the state of Oregon have had to cancel events over the past two years, 70 percent have reported the crisis is having a severe financial impact, and 83 percent have had to mitigate these losses with layoffs, furloughs, and other cost-saving measures.

Emergency relief funds from the state and federal government have helped this vital sector survive this far, and we thank the Oregon Legislature for its past support. Even so, the recent Omicron wave has unfortunately forced another round of cancellations and closures, and the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Business Pulse Survey reports that the country's arts-related businesses and entertainment venues, which are significant economic drivers in our community, will take significantly more time to recover than other businesses.

HB 4040 represents a lifeline for our local artists, arts organizations, and venues that remain in distress, including hundreds of smaller organizations that were unable to access other federal relief programs and many vital nonprofits that are led by Black, indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and people of color.

We urge you to support this important bill and help ensure that artists and arts organizations can play an important role in our economic and emotional recovery.

Thank you,

Jenni GreenMiller  
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**Hand2Mouth** is a theatre ensemble committed to creating and touring **bold and accessible new work**.  
501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization, founded in 2003 | EIN 71-0916574