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To: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business
RE: HB 2498, Creation of the Cultural Impact Program

Dear r Chair Grayber and Committee Members,

Since the start of the COVID Pandemic, Oregon has experienced some of the longest pandemic-related shutdowns. As both a theatre production company, and an arts and culture venue, we have been affected tremendously. Experts in this field see the recovery from these events as a 5-year cycle, and based upon our numbers we are no different. Patrons and attendees are still slow to return to in-person gatherings; many performances have been canceled as performers were sick with COVID-19. Attendance rates for some organizations are less than 59% of what they were before the pandemic.

Since reopening in 2021 Bag&Baggage Productions and The Vault Theater have seen a dramatic decrease in both individual giving, and attendance. Our total contributed income has dropped from roughly \$520,000.00 in our 2018/2019 fiscal year, to \$340,000.00 in our 2020/2021 fiscal year; much of that income in 2020/2021 consisted of COVID related recovery and support grants.

Prior to the pandemic we were seeing average audience attendance at roughly 85% of the house. As of our most recent performance, we have seen an average of roughly 45% available seating. We, and the rest of the entertainment industry, are in dire need of support in order to continue being relevant to our audience and our municipalities.

All the Best,

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