

Submitter: Monica Mast  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Hello, my name is Monica Mast, I was there on the 8th to testify in person and my name was not called. As a native Oregonian, voter, employee and small business owner of Alberta Street Pub music venue, alongside my business partner Tyrone Hendrix, who played for you all recently, I am here today to voice my support of HB2459, the arts recovery fund. Yoko Ono said, "art is a way of survival".

The 18 months of forced closures due to the pandemic annihilated the arts industry across the state. This not only affected the businesses and venues offering arts to their community, but the individual artists, like Tyrone Hendrix, who's sole source of income is music, as well. The state mandated closures nearly made it impossible for him to put food on the table to support his family. The 2020 emergency covid funding gave the arts a pathway to survival, and in turn, opened doors for people like Tyrone to become a venue owner and bring black ownership back to Alberta Street.

The ROI on the arts is huge; for every \$1 spent on a ticket, \$12 are spent on surrounding businesses. Take the Shakespeare Festival for example; this event alone brings millions of dollars into their community, and you cannot quantify the emotional and spiritual benefits as well. Art, in every form, is a universal language and is also geographically distributed throughout the state offering economic benefits as well as local jobs. From the Art Museum to small venues like mine sprinkled throughout Oregon we offer a place of peace, solace and creativity. Not to mention, collectively when you place all of our small business together alongside The Art Museum and other large anchors of tourism, there is more money spent on the arts spaces than on professional sports, yet we are one of the least invested in and we were closed the longest.

We are on the path to recovery from the pandemic and we need your help to rebuild and recover. Art may be a way of survival, but I am asking you to also help us thrive.