

Submitter: Sherry Franzen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

To: The Ways and Means Committee Date: April 24, 2023

Greetings, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Committee Members. I am writing in support of the Arts Recovery Fund Bill (HB 2459/SB 5506). My name is Sherry Franzen, and I am a current and past board member, serving the Community Center for the Performing Arts housed in the historic Woodmen of the World (W.O.W.) Hall in downtown Eugene, Oregon. The W.O.W. Hall was built in 1932 and has been on the historic registry since 1996. I've served on this board three times prior to my current term.

Since the 1970s, the W.O.W. Hall has served as a vibrant membership-driven community center in Eugene and is valued by many - locally, regionally, and even nationally. There's no place like it anywhere.

I started volunteering in 1992 and have personally witnessed an array of local talent to nationally and world-remowned performers. People come from near and far to attend concerts, comedy and dance events.

Along with paid staff, events consistently depend on volunteers, many of whom are very young, teenagers included. Some teens have devoted themselves for years, ultimately being hired to paid positions.

Since the close of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been reaching out to those who traditionally knew of the W.O.W. Hall via word-of-mouth, such as among University of Oregon students. We strive to build inclusivity in our community by offering a broad diversity of appealing cultural experiences. We are working hard to achieve lasting financial sustainability by growing our membership - all to ensure we continue to offer fine programming to all interested.