



Literary Arts

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Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: CREF Slate 2023-25

Dear Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of Literary Arts, a statewide organization based in downtown Portland, I respectfully request that the Oregon Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction support the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon's (CACO) 2023 Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) slate of capital construction projects.

The 16 endorsed projects on the slate include an allocation of \$1 million from CREF in support of Literary Arts' renovation of our new 14,000 square foot headquarters at 716 SE Grand Avenue. This beautiful space will allow Literary Arts to nearly quadruple our current footprint and allow us to create more classroom, seminar, and event space so we can welcome more people, host more programs, and deepen our impact in the community.

The project will establish a new cultural and community center in the inner industrial eastside of Portland's downtown core, bringing much needed activity to a part of the city that has not recovered from the pandemic and continues to be significantly impacted by homelessness. In March 2022, the nonprofit Central East Side Together removed 98,200 pounds of trash, 6,399 needles and 12,150 square feet of graffiti, and supplied over 900 free meals in this neighborhood. During the day, Literary Arts' retail space and administrative offices will be a bustling destination, and in the evenings our workshops, seminars, and events will increase foot traffic, both of which will contribute to an increased sense of safety in the neighborhood.

Additionally, research has shown that in lower-income neighborhoods, cultural resources are "significantly" linked to better health, schooling, and security¹. The research, which controlled for economic wellbeing, race, and ethnicity, found the presence of cultural resources is directly associated with:

- 14% decrease in cases of child abuse and neglect
- 5% decrease in obesity
- 18% increase in kids scoring in the top stratum on English and math exams
- 18% decrease in the serious crime rate

¹ <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/new-research-shows-arts-culture-improve-health-safety-well/>

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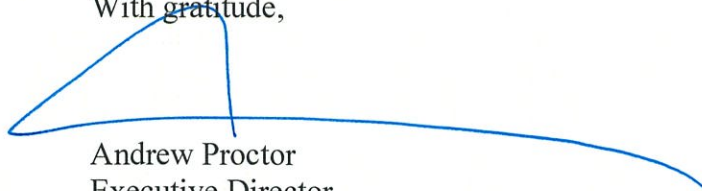
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I have hosted tours and briefings with the following elected officials who have verbally supported our project and the CREF slate: Senator Kathleen Taylor, Representative Rob Nosse, Representative Maxine Dexter, and Representative Janelle Bynum. I have also met with the following elected officials to share the details of our project, for which they indicated support: House Speaker Dan Rayfield, Senator Bill Hansell, and Senator Lew Frederick.

As we discuss public health and safety the arts play a vital role in our recovery. The 16 projects on the CREF slate were thoroughly reviewed by CACO board members, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Oregon Cultural Trust. We are confident that these well-developed projects represent diverse genres in the cultural sector, offer options for increased equity and access, and ensure geographic distribution throughout Oregon.

I ask the committee to fund the \$11.88M slate of CACO's endorsed projects and prioritize increased access and expansion of arts and culture in our communities.

With gratitude,



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