

Submitter: Becky Hawkins

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB4124

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for considering this bill to fund cultural organizations that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, the last couple of years have been a time of isolation and polarization for a lot of Oregonians. It's also been a time of financial desperation for a lot of artists, musicians, venues, and cultural institutions. This funding will help Oregonians to bounce back on several fronts.

Several of the organizations listed in the bill provide arts education to young people who missed out on important social development during the Zoom years. Arts education has been shown to increase confidence, empathy, cooperation, and emotional well-being, which are important to develop in the next generation.

When people attend concerts, plays, and shows, they bring business to local restaurants and shops. They might explore a neighborhood they've never been to before, or revise their assumption that downtown Portland burned to the ground in 2020 and never recovered. The economic benefits of this bill will spread to small businesses around Oregon.

The performing arts, visual arts, libraries, and museums all bring people together. They can foster a sense of history, continuity, and belonging. Yet many smaller organizations operate on a shoestring budget with little cushion for something as disruptive as a pandemic. The funds allocated by HB4124 will be well spent in supporting these organizations that have lost so much to COVID-19.

Thank you,
Becky