

Submitter: Lauren Jost

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3189

Dear Legislators,

On behalf of the board and staff of Arts for Learning Northwest, as well as the 120 individual artists who are represented on our artist roster, I submit this testimony in support of HB 3189.

Oregon is known for being home to innovators, makers, and a robust community of creative thinkers, but we can't assume that will always be the case. After years of underinvestment and budget cuts, most of the 60,000 Oregonians who work professionally in arts and culture know that the stability of their sector is threatened by economic uncertainty and lack of resources.

Every corner of Oregon has a group of artists and nonprofit organizations and private businesses that are keeping their community's culture and art alive by producing artistic events, goods and services, and educational opportunities; these activities are essential for the overall health and vitality of our towns, counties, and state. The arts do more than entertain—they drive innovation, economic prosperity, and foster a strong sense of place. The total arts and culture sector pumps \$9.5 billion into Oregon's economy each year, \$830 million of which is in the nonprofit sector, while also strengthening our sense of belonging, connectedness, and community.

The Oregon Arts Commission supports hundreds of artists and nonprofit organizations across the state as well as providing support for much needed arts education programs that provide the skills and vision for the next generation of innovators. But for the last two decades, the OAC's budget has remained flat, even as costs have rapidly increased. An increased investment in Oregon's arts and culture sector is desperately needed to ensure that our communities do not lose the essential artists and institutions that make our state what it is.

Oregon's nonprofit arts and culture organizations annually generate \$155 million in state and local taxes, while receiving only a fraction of that back in government support. HB 3189 provides much needed and long overdue resources to support a struggling sector that touches every Oregonian's life, whether they know it or not. Please ensure the passage of this bill so that the creativity of Oregon's workers, industries, and students can continue flourishing for generations to come.

Thank you,

Lauren Jost
Executive Director
Arts for Learning NW