

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE AT THE ARMORY

February 17, 2025

Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chairs Diehl & Isadore, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Marissa Wolf; I am the Artistic Director at Portland Center Stage. I am here to express strong support for HB 3189 Ensuring that communities across Oregon continue to benefit from vibrant artistic and cultural experiences which create joy, belonging, and resilience - essential for our thriving state and democracy.

For 36 years, Portland Center Stage has played a pivotal role in the state's cultural landscape, producing world-class theater while cultivating wide reaching community engagement, economic growth, and arts education. Each year, PCS welcomes nearly 100,000 patrons to The Armory in Downtown Portland, a LEED Platinum-certified historic venue that serves as a hub for exhilarating storytelling and theatrical experiences. We contract with 5 unions and employ 60 full-time staff and over 60 artists and technicians a year. We are an org where everyone can see themselves on stage, while making the arts accessible to all.

The Oregon Arts Commission has long been instrumental in supporting arts organizations across the state. The economic contributions of the arts are undeniable, fueling local businesses, drawing tourism, and generating millions in revenue for communities statewide. The performing arts, in particular, create a ripple effect that benefits restaurants, hotels, and small businesses, reinforcing the arts as a powerful economic driver.

Beyond economic impact, investment in the arts fosters education and community engagement. Portland Center Stage provides theater education to approximately 9,000 students annually. Additionally, Portland Center Stage offers more than 70 free community programs each year, providing space for cultural celebrations, public discussions, and a mix of music, visual art, and dance by a breathtaking and diverse range of Oregon artists. Similar programs are taking place in arts organizations across the state, creating opportunities for connection and civic dialogue.

The need for increased public investment in the arts is urgent. Funding for the Oregon Arts Commission will help stabilize and sustain the arts ecosystem, ensuring that organizations large and small can continue their critical work.

I would ask the Committee now - who do we want to be as a State? This funding for non-profit arts and culture is fundamental to the humanity of all people in Oregon. I implore you to approve this funding, ensuring that Oregon's arts institutions can continue to serve millions of people throughout our state, support local economies, and shine a light into the future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Marissa Wolf

Artistic Director, Portland Center Stage