

Emerson Levy
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
House District 53



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 17th, 2025

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

I am writing today in support of HB 3191 which funds crucial arts and culture organizations in Oregon. These spaces are extremely important for community-building and creating a sense of belonging for various identity groups. Involvement in the arts and cultural activities has benefits for public education, tourism, and mental health.

I wanted to specifically discuss the High Desert Museum in Bend, which would receive \$2 million with the passing of this bill. The High Desert Museum provides exciting and fascinating environmental education for people of all ages. Children can explore the beauty of the natural world and learn about Oregon's vast cultural history in an engaging, community-centered space. The High Desert Museum, and many spots like it, have become a popular travel destination for tourists and provide a sense of identity for the region.

The funds to the High Desert Museum will be some of the "last dollars in," as the High Desert Museum has been engaged in a lengthy capital campaign to raise funds for their expansion.

Prioritizing this funding in Oregon provides important access to the arts, which builds community and enhances our connections to each other. The arts promote critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and social engagement. Likewise, culturally-specific community resources aid in self-confidence and promote empathy and curiosity.

I urge you to support HB 3191 and provide vital funding to these arts and culture organizations in Oregon. These resources boost the local economy, create a sense of belonging, promote unique approaches to education, and further exemplify the wonder and beauty of our state.

Emerson Levy
State Representative, House District 53