

Testimony on HB 4027

February 17, 2014

Bob Speltz, Oregon Cultural Trust Board Chair

bob.speltz@gmail.com

Good afternoon, my name is Bob Speltz. I'm the Chair of the Oregon Cultural Trust board of directors. I'm here today to speak with you about House Bill 4027.

House Bill 4027, if enacted, will move both the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust out of Business Oregon to another, undetermined agency in state government.

While the boards of the Arts Commission and the Cultural Trust have not taken a formal position on House bill 4027, I would like to share my personal perspectives with you. I'd also like to update you on various planning activities already underway.

My primary message to you today is that neither I nor my board colleagues are opposed to studying, recommending or making changes that would improve the overall effectiveness, efficiency or impact of these organizations. However, we have not had the time nor the opportunity to advise or work with staff to study options, consider fiscal impacts, or consult with other state agencies about relocating the Arts Commission or Cultural Trust.

As advisory board members appointed by the Governor, we serve as *advisors* on policy matters that help fulfill the vision and mission of these respective organizations which includes increasing access to and participation in culture for all Oregonians. As advisory boards, we also study existing policies and make recommendations for change or implementation.

Moving these organizations to an undetermined state agency prior to any planning, analysis or careful study, concerns me.

Over the past year, our boards have been working diligently with staff to make a number of important changes that we believe are improving the overall effectiveness, efficiency and impact of our organizations. Relocating the organizations has been among the ideas suggested but it has not been seriously considered or studied by our boards or staff.

I would urge you today to resist the temptation to relocate these organizations and instead allow our boards and other key stakeholders to continue a planning process already underway that will result in a package of changes we hope to bring to you in the 2015 session.

In April, the Cultural Advocacy Coalition will convene a larger gathering with leaders from the philanthropic and cultural community, businesses and policymakers who are interested in revitalized rural communities and vibrant urban centers, arts education and

a strong creative economy. These leaders will be invited to come together and respond to the question: “What role should the State play in supporting and advancing Oregon’s cultural life?”

The statewide conversation will begin in April with a comprehensive look at Oregon’s current efforts, review of available research and then an examination of best practices in comparable states across the nation. Recommendations from the strategic planning discussions will be opened up to further comment and review by county coalitions, statewide boards, legislators and stakeholders, prior to the 2015 Session.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.