



February 5, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

We are writing today to express our support for SB 531.

The North Clackamas Chamber of Commerce represents over 500 members who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. We support entrepreneurs and the jobs they create.

This past year has been a difficult one for our business community. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in wide-spread changes to our daily lives, and ultimately, on our ability to do business.

With the onset of COVID-19, Governor Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, which shuttered many of our local businesses in the interest of protecting public health and slowing the spread of this virus. These closures resulted in many businesses suffering extensive losses. It meant laying off employees, losing inventory, losing customers, and for some, it meant losing their business entirely.

Ranae's on Main Street in Oregon City was a thriving restaurant growing and expanding their operations prior to COVID-19. She has just embarked on an \$80,000 expansion of her restaurant, just hired additional employees and was bringing more clientele into the downtown Oregon City area. Since the closures, she applied for PPP loans, kept her key employees paid, as was requested of her. When she was allowed to re-open less than two weeks to only be shut down again. Now she is faced with loans that can't be repaid, losing her home because she is the primary earner for her family. Her whole life, like many other small businesses, is tied to the restaurant. Many like Ranae, are facing losing "everything" unless re-opened fully and compensated properly for her losses.

When businesses are closed due to public health emergencies like COVID-19, it is important that the state help those businesses recover. Our local businesses are the life-blood of our community and our economy, especially our small and mid-sized businesses who have shouldered the greatest weight of these closures. We feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why we support SB 531.

SB 531 would allow businesses to be reimbursed for closures made during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses sacrificed their livelihoods in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses - and the jobs they provide - survive.

We hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,

Laura Edmonds

Laura Edmonds, CEO