

February 5, 2021

Dear Chair Manning and members of the committee,

I am writing today to express my support for SB 531.

The Keizer Chamber of Commerce represents many business members and their families who are committed to growing business opportunities and providing living-wage jobs for families in our community. I appreciate that they 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 the business community's 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.

One business that we have seen suffer is Mommie and Maddie's in Keizer which is one of my family's favorite places to eat. They are a small family-owned business. They had to lay off workers, order PPE and cleaning supplies, change their hours and were never sure how much product to order from week to week based on the frequently changing status of the emergency orders. The citizens of Keizer have stepped up to help keep Mommie and Maddie's open, but it is very difficult.

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. I feel it is important for these businesses to be made whole. This is why I 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, as per the example above, in order to protect the health of Oregonians. In turn, we should help these businesses - and the jobs they provide - to survive.

As an appointed and elected liason to the Keizer Chamber of Commerce from several community government agencies (Southeast Keizer Neighborhood Association, Keizer Fire District Budget Committee, the Marion County Fair Board and Cherriots), I have seen so many people and businesses struggle. I am speaking on behalf of the citizens of Keizer. I hope you will stand with businesses in this state and support SB 531.

Sincerely,

Colleen Busch,

