

Submitter: Johanna Lindsey

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Recovery and Prosperity

Measure: HB4040

The local independent live music industry has been one of the hardest hit economic communities in the area due to the pandemic. We closed March 12, 2020 and did not reopen until August 31 2021. The fact we are in operation and able to submit this testimony today is due to the funding we received via the Shuttered Venue Operator Grant. We are so grateful that funding was approved and it has been a lifesaver, but its use is finite as we are approaching the end of the allowed expense covered period. With the uncertainty and decreased revenue in our business today, we want to appeal to you for additional funding via HB4040.

2022 has begun quite tenuously, with many shows being cancelled or rescheduled due to Omicron. The reschedules and cancellations result in decreased revenue from customer refund requests. The lower attendance for shows that go on as scheduled results in low food and beverage sales which are a cornerstone of our business's income. Staffing has become much more expensive and we want to pay our team well and fairly, to account for the risk of interfacing with the unpredictable public during a time that is stressful on everyone. We provide all staff sick time up front to discourage anyone working when feeling sick, just because rent may be due. We are covering employee health insurance premiums 100% this year and with additional funding we could extend this benefit to everyone beyond 2022. Vendor service rates and prices of materials have gone up significantly in the past 2 years as well. It will be a long road before we are ever "back to normal" as prices exponentially rise in all areas, and revenues continue to be depressed.

These concert venues are such a huge cornerstone to our community. We provide livelihoods to our locals, encourage tourism, and help people enjoy themselves for an evening. The variety of talent we bring to the community has such a huge impact on our culture and education. Independent venues and our rich local nightlife have always been something for which Portland is known and cherished, and the industry is well worth protecting. Please support HB4040 so Portland can continue to be the unique destination and home that it is.