

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I know you have some difficult decisions to make about where to spend money. What's missing in the budget framework is the **very heart of Oregon – our voice, expression, cultural identity and economic engine: the arts and humanities.**

It is imperative to Oregon's recovery that we include HB 2459 in Oregon's budget. It is structured to do two things:

1. Send much-needed relief (21 million) to key, geographically distributed struggling arts institutions (86 of them).
2. Create an essential Arts Recovery Fund (29 million) that will help hundreds of arts organizations, state-wide, participate in and lead Oregon's recovery. The last time such a fund was created, it was from federal Coronavirus Relief Funds - it literally saved over 600 arts organizations, they can be seen [HERE](#).

Economically, we simply MUST invest in the arts and arts industries.

The economic return on investing in art, specifically performing arts, is greater than any other industry. Particularly with small arts organizations, for every dollar spent on an event ticket, twelve dollars are spent on the local economy ([source link](#)):

- tourism
- hotels
- restaurants
- transportation
- bars

The cultural impact is unmatched.

1. **Ending division:** Our performance spaces are where we come together as diverse peoples. At the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, you'll find every stripe of political persuasion, marveling in a turn of phrase or gorgeous set design. At a small music venue in Eugene, you'll find hippie girls dancing with cowboys, rich and poor, Native American instruments blending with ultra-modern millennial sequencers and electronic beats.
2. **Art and Performance lift voices:** ONLY through the arts are the voices of marginalized and historically underrepresented socioeconomic groups heard.

Oregon Arts are hurting like no other state's arts:

Oregon was closed BY MANDATE LONGER THAN ANY OTHER STATE. Our industry is struggling intensely against a tide of unprecedented setbacks:

1. We were closed (in most counties) for OVER 18 MONTHS. Longer for annual events.
2. We must rebuild a workforce, practically from scratch.
3. Costs of goods and services have increased more than 25% since we were forced to close.

4. Labor costs have increased more than 30%, and many with experience have left the market for “open” states, or have left the industry.

Overall, Oregon ranks 38th in the country for arts spending.

Our spending on the arts (less than a \$0.50 per capita) is less than one tenth that of thriving states like Minnesota, Maryland, New York, etc.[\(source linked here\)](#)

The voice of Oregon, the appeal of Oregon, depends on the Arts. It’s a small investment with a huge return, both in dollars and invaluable quality of life respects. Bring Oregon up, bring Oregon together, by supporting the Arts.

**Jim Brunberg
Independent Venue Coalition
Mississippi Studios (an Independent Venue)
Composer (Wonderly)**