

Submitter: Larry Sipe
On Behalf Of: A state budget to protect Oregonians
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee,

Museums provide educational experiences on the arts, sciences, and cultures. Their rich offerings of diverse cultural elements instill understanding, compassion, and loving-kindness for all beings, human and non-human (plants, animals, and minerals). They foster a sense of community; connecting me with all ancestors past, present, and future. Visionary and necessary, museums and libraries are alive with endless opportunities. Libraries were my second home as a kid. Moved often during my childhood, but always found libraries to be safe, warm, inviting environments. Always the best bargain in town, as worlds awaited me, all available with my free library card. Save reading programs in Oregon. Reading is intellectually transformative and instills a lifelong love for learning. Students benefit from reading as they develop communication skills, confidence, and critical thinking. In addition, cognitive skills, creativity, and emotional intelligence are fostered through reading. Lastly, vocabulary building is improved, enhancing reading comprehension and fluency. Reading skills are elucidated by explicit and systematic teaching of words, in turn reinforcing reading and listening experiences requisite for knowledge building. Author Hermann Hesse writes of the value of books and reading: "Among the many worlds which man did not receive as a gift of nature, but which he created with his own mind, the world of books is the greatest. Every child, scrawling his first letters on his slate and attempting to read for the first time, in so doing, enters an artificial and complicated world; to know the laws and rules of this world completely and to practice them perfectly, no single human life is long enough. Without words, without writing, and without books there would be no history, there could be no concept of humanity. And if anyone wants to try to enclose in a small space in a single house or single room, the history of the human spirit and to make it his own, he can only do this in the form of a collection of books." From "Among the many worlds" Herman Hesse (1931). "The Magic of the Book" in S. Gilber ed., *Reading in Bed*. Jaffrey, N.H.: Godine. First published in *Bucherel und Bildungspfleger*, Stettin, (1931), p. 305. Prioritize the arts in the state budget. The arts are economic drivers, creating jobs and providing tax revenues. They build communities as well as generating prosperity. Social benefits of the arts include: economic revitalization, educational assets, cultural legacies, and fostering health and wellness. As a writer and musician, I personally benefit from active engagement with the arts. Such benefits include creative expression, community well-being, and social connection. Other social-emotional benefits I experience are improved confidence, stress management, and holistic development.

It is crucial that you prioritize protecting Oregonians and our immediate needs in your state budget. Actions from the White House and Republicans in Congress are enriching billionaires but creating real harm, job losses, higher prices, and economic instability for everyday people.

Oregonians are counting on you to protect us by holding steady.

As you build the state budget, I urge you to prepare for any coming economic downturn or federal funding reductions by doing what we know works to keep families stable: strategically investing in our communities and giving Oregonians more opportunities to thrive.

Please prioritize a state budget which protects Oregonians.

Thank you,