

Representative Lively and members of the House Economic Recovery and Prosperity Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Ginger Savage from Baker City, Oregon.

Thank you for letting me address the committee today offering my overwhelming support of HB 4040 which would invest \$50 million into Oregon Arts and Culture Organizations.

I am here representing the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon as a Board Member, which represents over four hundred arts, culture, heritage and humanities organizations in the state and our mission is to assure that the arts have a voice in the halls of government

I am also here as the Executive Director of Crossroads Carnegie Art Center in Baker City, Oregon we are the oldest continuously operating art center east of the Cascades. Founded in 1963 we provide a gallery for local and regional artists to sell artwork, arts education programs for small kids to learn ballet to senior citizens taking an evening watercolor painting class.

Our organization has survived the 1970 economy that devastated rural Oregon communities, we rebounded as a community in the 1980's to develop one of Oregon's most beloved cultural communities.

Crossroads moved back to the 1909 Carnegie Library in 2008 and was immediately slammed into the Great Recession. We have faced 9/11 and we have faced the Covid-19 Pandemic. Crossroads has stood through it all.

But we are facing troubling times.

Here are the financial facts:

- In 2020 we had only one quarter where we faced an extreme loss as we compared to 2019.
- In 2020, as the pandemic raged, government and foundations rallied to support non-profits.
- Our 2021 financial situation was more devastating than 2020 for Crossroads. If that is to be believed.
- We ended 2021 with a 91% loss compared to 2020. We had significant losses in three of the four quarters.
- Crossroads is running out of time. If we don't get support soon we might cease to exist. We are not unique.

We have heard that some legislators don't believe arts and culture needs these additional funds and nothing could be further than the truth. Our sector transformed itself within months. We have placed concerts, performance, art classes and shows online. During the darkest days it was our singers and musicians who uplifted us all. Now that shows are coming back the audience is still nervous. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival Covid testing bill for November and December was over \$200,000. We have tried everything to make this work. We have begged for donations. On Giving Tuesday I asked for toilet paper and paper towels.

The funding that was passed in the last legislative session is languishing undisbursed with Business Oregon and the passage of this bill would give critical administrative guidance to Business Oregon to get those funds out, we hope, by the end of 2022. Unless YOU push hard these new funds likely won't be out till 2023. The question is how many Crossroads we will lose until someone finds a sense of urgency.

You know all the facts about the importance of arts and cultural because throughout the last two years we have been communicating a lot with you.

You understand the significant role Arts, Cultural, Heritage and Humanities play in the lives of Oregonians. We have told you the economic impacts we have on the Oregon Economy.

We have shared the challenges of retaining the high skilled creative labor during the pandemic that simply cannot be hired from a Help Wanted ad.

We hope you understand that it will be the arts sector that will bring us back from the collective brink of the pandemic including the extreme political polarization across Oregon. It will be by going to concerts, shows, spending time with a new exhibit in a museum that we can find our humanity again.

But if there are no Hult's and Schnitzer Halls, if there is no Portland Art Museum or High Desert Museum, if there is no Crossroads and Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario, if there is no Crook County Museum and Pine Valley Community Museum, no Community Choirs and Orchestras...what would be the point?

We implore you to not only pass HB 4040 to invest \$50 million dollars into Arts and Culture Recovery but also assure that the marching orders are clear and that whoever distributes the money will get it out in 90-120 days because we can no longer wait. Justin Timberlake sang to us that there is "a light at the end of the tunnel."

I can't see it standing here in the dark.

I am going to stop and say thank you for allowing me to speak. I want to have time to ask questions of me. I think it is important that a dialogue is created about these issues, and I am here to answer your questions.