

**CULTURAL
ADVOCACY
COALITION
OF OREGON**



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**Nine Legislators form first-ever Oregon Arts and Cultural Caucus;
Public launch event scheduled for Monday, Feb. 27**

Salem, Oregon – Recognizing the vital role arts and culture play in the livability and prosperity of Oregon communities – and in enriching the lives of Oregonians – nine members of the Oregon Legislature have come together in a bi-partisan fashion to form the state’s first-ever Arts and Culture Caucus. The public is invited to meet Caucus members at a [launch event](#) scheduled from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 27, at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art in Salem.

Coordinated by Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), the Arts and Culture Caucus’ inaugural membership includes Sen. Dick Anderson (R-Lincoln City); Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Clackamas); Rep. Maxine Dexter (D-Portland); Rep. David Gomberg (D-Otis); Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena); Rep. John Lively (D-Springfield); Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Ashland); and Sen. Deb Patterson (D-Salem). Caucus membership is expected to expand.

“Arts and culture are so important to Oregon,” said Rep. Nosse. “All around our state, every day there are concerts, comedy events, public hearings, podcasts, theatrical performances, debates and community events that bring the people of our state together. We must support the cultural and community hubs in our neighborhoods and I hope this caucus will continue to ensure arts and culture thrive in this state.”

The Caucus will serve as a resource to the Oregon Legislature on key issues impacting the arts and culture sector. Its members will work closely with stakeholders including the Oregon Arts Commission, the Oregon Cultural Trust (and its Statewide Partners) and the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon to stay informed on the latest research and issues. It will also set an agenda on priorities for arts and culture legislation, including a sustainable and robust funding mechanism for arts and cultural initiatives.

Rep. Nosse and other members of the Caucus were instrumental in designating more than \$100 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds and American Rescue Plan funds to sustain Oregon arts, heritage and humanities organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a [survey](#) conducted by Business Oregon, Travel Oregon and the Small Business Development Center Network, only the accommodation industry suffered greater losses. Large cultural organizations continue to feel the impact, with many reporting that ticket sales remain only about 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Members of the Arts and Culture Caucus are currently considering legislative concepts and bills put forward by the Arts Commission, the Cultural Trust and the Cultural Advocacy Coalition.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contributed \$8 billion to Oregon's economy in 2020, representing 3.3 percent of the state's GDP, 60,994 jobs and total compensation of \$4.8 billion. Oregon nonprofit cultural organizations alone contribute at least \$687 million and support 22,299 jobs. This adds \$53 million to local and state government revenue.

“Public funding for arts and creativity is a high-return investment that benefits every Oregonian in every city, town and rural community across the state,” said Harlen Springer, vice chair of the Arts Commission. Springer collaborated with members of the Arts Commission Advancement Committee, including Chair Jenny Green, as well as Cultural Trust Chair Niki Price and Sue Hildick, senior advisor to the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, to support formation of the Arts and Culture Caucus.

“This is a momentous occasion for Oregon's 1,500+ arts, heritage and humanities organizations, and all who support them,” said Niki Price, chair of the Oregon Cultural Trust. “We applaud the Legislators who immediately signed up, and the Arts Commissioners who initiated the concept.”

“This year could be transformational for arts and culture in Oregon, making sure every Oregonian has access to creativity in their local community,” added J.S. May, president of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon. “We are honored that the caucus policymakers are elevating the needs of the creative sector both short-term and long-term to help our economy, our mental health and our healing from the pandemic.”

The Hallie Ford Museum of Art is located on the Willamette University campus at 700 State St. in Salem. [RSVP for the Feb. 27 launch event.](#)

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