

Oregon artPAC — 2016 Primaries

Contest: **Multnomah County Commission, Zone 1**

Candidate Name: Eric Zimmerman

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Candidate Web Site: EricZimmerman.org

Date of Questionnaire Submittal: 2/12/16

In a 140-character “tweet” format, tell us why you are running for office.

I am running because I believe in a strong middle class that supports family-wage jobs, the arts, and the most vulnerable in our community.

How many donors have contributed to your campaign?

71

How much money have you raised for your campaign?

\$16,168.98

What endorsements have you received?

Diane McKeel, Multnomah County Commissioner
Loretta Smith, Multnomah County Commissioner
Martha Schrader, Clackamas County Commissioner
Laurie Monnes Anderson, State Senator
Brent Barton, State Representative
Larry Morgan, Troutdale City Councilor
Jon Gustafson, Lake Oswego City Councilor
Stephen Marc Beaudoin, Multnomah Education Service District Director
Michael Calcagno, Mt. Hood Community College Director
Anita Yap, MultiCultural Collaborative

What role do the arts and culture play in the life of our region and what do the arts personally mean to you and your family?

I have always been a strong supporter of the arts and I believe Portland has a special role as a cultural, artistic hub in the United States. We have historically been able to foster an arts scene that brings immense economic and cultural value to our community whether it be through live theater and concerts

or art galleries, installation art spaces, and other forms of creative expression. I am proud to see our leadership in this regard and it means a lot to me as a lifelong Portlander.

How will you address the growing affordability crisis in our region for artists, arts organizations, and small arts businesses as it relates to housing and creative space?

There is no question that our housing crisis and exorbitant rent hikes have been felt acutely by the arts community and we must work hard to remedy this problem. There are too many people who want to live and work here, but can't afford to buy or rent a home here and we have to support policies such as inclusionary zoning and tenant protections if we want to keep a healthy artistic community here in our city. We must also be diligent in making sure that studio space and other creative spaces are available at reasonable prices for artists in addition to residential housing. We cannot forget the important role Portland plays as a refuge for the arts community.

How will you foster the growth of the creative economy in our region?

I believe the County has an essential role to play in stimulating creative and artistic economic development through a variety of means. First, I support the arts tax and would gladly explore other ideas to increase funding for arts programs countywide. Second, by implementing zoning codes and affordable housing measures we can stem the outflow of artists and guarantee they have a reliable place to live and share the fruits of their labor with the rest of the community.

How will you enhance the delivery of and support for arts education in school and neighborhood settings?

It is a serious problem that art education in our schools and in extracurricular programs has been defunded and underrepresented in recent years. I will be a proud advocate for increased funding measures to vital artistic programs and I will maintain an open-door policy for arts advocates to access County leadership and ensure their voices are heard. I take serious the advocacy that Commissioners need to have with Salem to ensure education funding is meeting the needs of students because when we fail to fund education the first thing often cut are programs in the arts.

How will you further the values of equity and access to the arts and culture? What do you see as the biggest challenges to progress in this area?

It is imperative that art and art education is accessible to all Oregonians, regardless of their background or economic standing. To make equitable access a reality, we must support and improve arts programs and education curriculum in schools throughout the County, including those outside of the central Portland area. I believe art programs have been historically neglected and this is an obstacle that must be overcome. Moreover, as with many County issues, a lack of sustainable funding for cultural programs is a continual grievance and that is why creative ways to raise revenue must be pursued. Lastly, the County should set clear expectations for groups receiving public support that their programs must serve

diverse and traditionally underserved communities.

What other public policies would you pursue to strengthen the creative capacity of our region?

If elected, I would support policies that uphold arts education as a core academic subject of learning. Additionally, I am a strong advocate for transparency and accountability and I would fight to ensure that funding earmarked for arts and culture programs is sufficient to not only maintain, but increase the prevalence of arts and culture in Multnomah County. The County should also take a proactive role in helping promote awareness about arts and culture events as they occur. We have done that to some degree with our ongoing support and advocacy of STEAM education and the addition of arts to that family of learning and expanding where our libraries play a critical role. Finally, I am a proud advocate of continuing the Percent for Art program in the construction of public projects in Multnomah County.

The following question is for candidates in City of Portland contests only. Do you support the voter-approved Arts Education and Access Fund and do you commit to maintaining it? What changes, if any, would you make to improve its administration?

The following question is for candidates in City of Portland, Clackamas County, Multnomah County, or Washington County contests only. Each year, you will have the opportunity to vote to approve a budget for arts funding through the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC). Do you commit to maintaining or increasing this budget allocation and funding level?

I am committed to maintaining the budget for arts funding at the County level and I would gladly fight to increase this allocation if revenue was available without negatively impacting important County programs.