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Representative Greg Smith, Co-Chair
Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On General Government

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Support for HB 5017 and the State Library

My name is Elizabeth López and I am Librarian Supervisor at the Hillsboro Public Library, coordinating the annual Summer Reading Program for our library. I strongly support HB 5017 and the State Library, which would secure funding for the Ready to Read grant that provides essential funding to successfully run our annual program.

The goal of our Summer Reading program is to prevent the summer slide and help children maintain their literacy skills by providing fun literacy-based activities with a free book. Due to the pandemic this past summer, we focused on minimizing participation barriers by designing a low-tech program with the belief that a program that works for those with low-tech access is a program that works for everyone. We created summer reading "Grab and Go" bags that included a free surprise book, a reading record, and art supplies. We distributed these Grab and Go bags in various locations around Hillsboro, including park summer lunch sites.

The Ready to Read grant was critical in our ability to purchase enough giveaway books to provide each child with a free book to keep and read for the program. Here are some highlights from our 2020 Summer Reading program:

- Distributed 9,682 summer reading Grab and Go bags
- Visited 28 locations including summer lunch sites
- 74% of books distributed were in English and 26% were in Spanish

It was especially critical that we were able to deliver Grab and Go bags to low-income apartment complexes and the migrant camp in our service area. At the time, one of the apartment complexes had multiple families who were quarantining due to testing positive for COVID and had been unable to access off-site services in general, especially for kids. At the migrant camp, we partnered with medical staff that were providing on-site medical care to distribute the bags on our behalf. It was critical that we were able to collaborate on these solutions to deliver summer reading bags to children in isolation this summer.

A small increase in Ready to Read grant funding would allow us to continue to meet our youngest patrons where they are and provide a sense of normalcy during this unstable time while connecting

them to opportunities to engage and grow their literacy skills over the summer. I've included some photographs to this testimony to illustrate what the program looked like at the site visits. I urge the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee to pass HB 5017. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

