

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Scharf and Nguyen, and members of the House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services,

My name is Tony Erickson, and I am a resident of Scappoose Oregon. I am writing in support of HB 2872 and the Imagination Library program. As a parent and an advocate for early childhood education, I have experienced the tremendous benefits of the Imagination Library program firsthand.

For those who may not be familiar, the Imagination Library program is a book-gifting initiative that provides free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five. The program was started by Dolly Parton in her home state of Tennessee and has since expanded to communities across the United States, including my own.

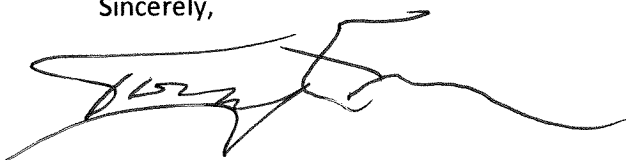
The Imagination Library program has been instrumental in promoting early literacy in our community, and I have seen firsthand how it has encouraged a love of reading in my own children. Statewide matching funds would allow for the stabilization and expansion of the program, even if the program exists in your region. This would ensure that every child in our state has access to the program, regardless of where they live.

Studies have shown that the Imagination Library program promotes kindergarten readiness and third grade reading proficiency. In fact, children who participate in the program score higher on kindergarten readiness assessments and have better reading outcomes in third grade than those who do not participate.

Moreover, the program has been effective in increasing equitable access to books and reading materials. Anecdotal evidence from my community shows that the program has been particularly impactful in low-income areas where families may not have the financial resources to purchase books on their own.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to pass HB 2872 and support the Imagination Library program. By doing so, we can ensure that all children in our state have access to high-quality books and the resources they need to succeed in school and beyond. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Erickson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.