

February 28, 2023

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

My name is Denise Dougan. I live in Portland, Or. I am writing in support of HB 2872, the expansion of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to include the entire State of Oregon. I am the representative of the affiliate, Barbara Belle Dougan Foundation, that supports the Imagination Library in the City of Portland. I love this program! Imagination Library is simple and mails high-quality age-appropriate books, free of charge, to children from birth to age 5 monthly, regardless of family's income. These books are sent directly to the children at home with their name on the label!

As the person from our affiliate delegated to administer the day-to-day operations of our Imagination Library, I receive emails from the parents of the registrants sharing their experiences with the Imagination Library. The first email I received was from a father who said that his son loves his books! His son asks his parents to read to him every day. "The books get torn and damaged showing signs of love. Thanks so much as my son is beginning to learn to love books." Another grandmother writes in thanking us for enrolling her grandson into the Imagination Library program. "I know he will enjoy them in years to come. He is learning disabled so the books will be a great benefit to him. I read to him and I am praying he will be able to read them to me one day." And another mother writes in thanking us for sponsoring her son in the Imagination Library program. "Gosh at 7 months old his favorite toys are his books. Some hard days, the only way to keep him from crying is reading to him. Needless to say his books are well loved and well chewed! We really appreciate our books."

Imagination Library inspires children and parents to enjoy reading. And if children can start good reading habits at an early age, maybe Imagination Library can make a difference in their, really our, future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please pass HB 2872.