

**DEB PATTERSON  
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL  
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



**OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON**

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10, which includes South and West Salem, Monmouth, and Independence. I would like to express my support for HB 2872, which would establish the Imagination Library of Oregon Program fund. This fund would use state resources to provide enrolled children under age five with one age-appropriate book per child per month, with the goal of increasing child literacy rates. Currently, this program is in operation in many parts of Oregon, and this bill seeks to expand access statewide.

Low levels of reading proficiency and access to reading material are issues that are particularly affecting Oregon's children. Here in Salem, we currently have only one library to cover the entire city of Salem. Keizer's public library is open weekday afternoons on four weekdays, four hours on Saturday, and closed on Sunday, offering just 6 hours per week when parents who work 9-5 pm can take their children to the library. Other Oregon communities face similar challenges.

Meanwhile, 2022 assessments of reading proficiency have shown Oregon student reading levels to be among the lowest in the country, with 37% of eighth graders and 44% of fourth graders testing below "basic" in reading. Access and exposure to reading material from an early age has been shown to increase reading proficiency levels in children, which in turn leads to better academic outcomes far into the future. Having books in the home makes a tremendous difference to the future success of pre-school children in all our families.

Providing funds for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program would help raise reading proficiency levels in Oregon while addressing systemic inequalities that affect learning outcomes. Disparities in reading proficiency are not evenly distributed; students of color and students from low-income families have scored far lower on reading proficiency tests, and access to reading material is an oft-cited factor. A study conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics demonstrated the effectiveness of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in achieving kindergarten readiness in participants. The Imagination Library has been proven to be effective, making this legislation a solid investment in the futures of Oregon's children.

I urge your aye vote.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deb Patterson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Patterson