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**Dave Burtner**  
Board Member, Eugene  
Imagination Library

February 27, 2023

Early Childhood and Human Services Committee,

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Scharf and Nguyen, and members of the Committee, my name is Dave Burtner. As a 5+ year board member of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Board in Eugene, I'm writing in support of HB 2872.

The Eugene Imagination Library, coordinated by Eugene Public Library with support from the Eugene Public Library Foundation, is a chapter reaching over 3500 children age 0 to 5 with age appropriate books delivered by mail monthly. Through outreach to schools, social service agencies, pediatricians and others, parents sign up their children and start receiving one book a month in the mail. Annual local fund raising events provide the resources for a book a month mailed to the 3500 children currently on the list. A \$25 donation ensures one child will receive a book each month for a year.

Additional administrative support is provided by the Dolly Parton Foundation and the Eugene Public Library Foundation.

While the Eugene community broadly and generously supports reading opportunities for children and recognizes the importance of early reading opportunities for childhood literacy development, kindergarten readiness and a foundation for the critical 3rd grade reading level, many children can not participate if they live outside the boundaries on the Eugene Public Library district. The patchwork of Imagination Library programs throughout Oregon, largely focused in urban areas, misses thousands of the children.

Statewide funding would not pre-empt the local programs that are already working but would broaden the program and provide needed stability so every child in Oregon could participate. Books and reading provide a necessary framework for our children, for their future and for the future of a literate, civil society for Oregon.

I encourage you to support HB 2872

Sincerely,



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Dave Burtner

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