



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 103-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

March 1, 2023

To: [House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services](#)  
Representative Lisa Reynolds, Chair

Re: [HB 2872](#) – Establishes Oregon Imagination Library Account – **Support**

The League of Women Voters supports HB 2872 based on our belief that literacy efforts such as the Imagination Library promote equality of educational opportunity and greatly increase reading readiness and later educational success for pre-school children. The simple premise is that children from ages 0 to 5 receive an age-appropriate book each month at absolutely no cost to their parents. This 50/50 matching program is made possible through the largesse of the Dolly Parton Foundation and is currently thriving in 15 states.

In Oregon, only 38,651 children (18% of those eligible) are enrolled in the Imagination Library Project through individual community efforts. The establishment of a statewide Imagination Library account expands this proven project to many more children throughout the state. It is hoped that the number will expand to over 100,000 if state matching funds are provided. We have no doubt it will be especially valuable in those areas of the state where access to books for young children is limited. The cost of the Imagination Library Project to the state is minimal (\$2.49 million during the 2023-25 biennium) when compared to the benefits derived from increased literacy rates.

It is no secret that reading scores have plummeted in recent years in our state. We firmly believe this program can be a low-cost way to boost scores and instill a love of reading at a critical time in a child’s life. League members have witnessed the success of this program in their communities for many years, and there is no better time than the present to expand it to a statewide program.

We urge passage of HB 2872, and we thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this bill.

Rebecca Gladstone  
LWVOR President

Anne Nesse  
LWVOR Education  
Coordinator

Marge Easley  
LWVOR Action  
Committee