

Submitter: Jessica Roshak
On Behalf Of: Eugene Springfield Dyslexia Tutoring
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB2872

To whom it May Concern,

Thank you for your consideration of opening access to Imagination Library to all 0-5 children in Oregon. As we think about all the immediate triage needed to address things like poverty, crime, homelessness, and addiction in our state, it is imperative for our legislature to always be thinking about the "long game" of how we can set our state up for future success in 10, 20, 30, 50, or 100 years. The best way to get ourselves out of the triage mode we find ourselves in is to invest heavily in education, families, and early childhood in any way that we can. Will a book a month from 0-5 in the hands of every child in Oregon resolve the crisis of literacy our we've dug ourselves into? Absolutely not -- it is up to our public schools to adopt teaching methods that respond to the science of reading and stop using interventions that don't work and waste time and money.

However, getting books into the hands of all children from birth to five does help level the playing field between haves and have-nots, give all families the necessary resource they need to create positive experiences around books, build home libraries that will be enjoyed for years, and prepare all children to enter kindergarten knowing how to turn pages the correct way, how words flow left to right on a page, and be introduced to new art, language, and vocabulary. Imagination Library is a proven system of accomplishing this goal, and the program is run efficiently and responsibly. It is a "long game" part of the solution to our state's many problems, but one that will also have an immediate and positive effect on every family who enrolls. Thinking of the rural kids without local libraries, or the kids stuck at home while their parents work and their elderly grandparent holds down the house -- imagine the magic of receiving a new book in the mail that's all theirs to enjoy and keep and read. Resolving the literacy crisis will take much more effort on all our parts, yes. but Imagination Library is a no-brainer to start those solutions from birth. If kids enter kindergarten having been read to and exposed to books, teachers jobs get that much easier and more ground can be covered in those critical K-3 years at school.

Sincerely,
Jess Tuerk Roshak