

Co-Chairs Sanchez and Steiner, members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, my name is Kris Wiley. I live in Roseburg and am the Roseburg Public Library Director. I am here in support of HB 2872, a funding proposal to provide Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program statewide at about \$1.7 million dollars for the 2023-25 biennium, a modest investment that helps set our youngest learners on the path to school and life success.

The Friends of the Roseburg Public Library serves as our local affiliate for Imagination Library, which provides one new, free, age-appropriate book to registered children each month from birth to fifth birthday. Since our program launched in October 2019, almost 2000 children in the greater Roseburg, Glide, and Idleyld Park communities have received 38,000 books.

Statewide matching funds would help stabilize Imagination Library, which would allow me to shift some of my focus from fundraising to engaging more families in this amazing program. Like so many of us in rural Oregon, I wear many hats, and not only do I manage Roseburg Public Library, I oversee the fundraising, publicity, registrations, and inquiries for Imagination Library.

We want every one of the approximately 3000 eligible children in our service area to participate. Studies have shown that Imagination Library participants demonstrate higher levels of academic readiness in reading and math, higher scores in reading comprehension in school, and reports from families of increased interest in reading and in actual reading in homes.

Imagination Library helps level the playing field for all of our families because the only criterion for participation is that the child lives in an area served by an affiliate of the program. It breaks down barriers for the 46 percent of households in Douglas County living in financial hardship and those living a significant distance from a public library.

This program ensures all families have tools that can help them prepare their children for reading and school success.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 2872, which invests in our children. Thank you for your time and consideration.