

To: Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

From: Hilly Alexander, Wilsonville, Oregon

I am writing in support of HB 2811, a request to continue the 50% state match funding the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails a high quality age-appropriate book once a month to children from birth until their fifth birthday at no cost to the parents.

Benefits: The program delivers books to the youngest children. Reading with babies and toddlers supports their brain development. Children beg their parents to read to them when their book arrives in the mail. This is especially valuable in families who are not used to reading together. Children from all socio-economic situations receive the same book and that helps to create community once they reach kindergarten.

Book Selection: A team of experts meets annually to select the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library books for each age group. Currently, two of the twelve books children receive each year are in both Spanish and English. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library encourages families to read together and builds routines around reading. The books include reading tips that are tailored to each book.

The Wilsonville Imagination Library extends the Wilsonville Public Library's early literacy programs. We have mailed more than 105,000 books in the last thirteen years to 4,200 children. The most common remark we hear from parents is that their children get excited when their book arrives in the mail and want to read it right away. Parents who might not otherwise read aloud with their child, read the new book together.

The Directors of the Wilsonville Public Library Foundation which funds Wilsonville Imagination Library strongly support House Bill 2811. We respectfully ask all members of the Committee to support HB 2811.

Thank you!