

February 1, 2026

Dear Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Scarf and Walters, and House Interim Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services members,

I am reaching out as a proud Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Champion for the affiliate Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub. I am a retired Salem-Keizer educator and worked 30 years as an Elementary Teacher and a Title 1 Reading Teacher. I highly support **HB 4022** and encourage you to help Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon (DPILOR) codify this program into an Oregon statute.

Since we began signing up children for this program in 2022, we've expanded from two zip codes in Salem-Keizer and one each in Independence and Falls City to serving 19 zip codes in Marion and Polk Counties. Initially, limiting registration to just four zip codes made it difficult at events, as parents outside those areas were disappointed and eager to know when their children could participate. As of today, we have 8,954 participants and over 3,500 who have graduated.

After launching statewide in May 2025, responses changed significantly: families now either enthusiastically confirm their child's enrollment or ask for more information when they are approached. In June 2025, families were given the choice between English or Bilingual books, which may also support parents learning English.

Dolly's 80th birthday was January 19, 2026. The Early Learning Hub made 13 kits for libraries in their area to help them celebrate Dolly's birthday. I attended two of the celebrations and one 4-year-old child stole my heart when she said, "I'm making a birthday card for my friend Dolly. She sends me a book every month!!

The enthusiasm for reading is spreading across our state. It's very important to continue this proven, powerful investment in Oregon's children and it's one we cannot afford to lose. Please support **HB 4024** to keep the Imagination Library of Oregon going strong and available for Oregon's children for years to come.

Sincerely,

Kathy Martell
Salem, Oregon
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Champion
Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub Affiliate