

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

I am writing in support of HB 4022 which codifies Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon into a statute.

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. The program encourages children to develop a love of reading and learning and improves third-grade reading proficiency and high school graduation rates.

*A father recently told me that his 12 year old son reads a lot because he got books from the Imagination Library when he was little.*

Benefits: The program mails 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. Parents now have the option to receive all books in bilingual, English/Spanish, format.

The Wilsonville Imagination Library, a local program partner, extends the Wilsonville Public Library's early literacy programs. We have mailed more than 115,000 books in the last fourteen years to 4,600 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 4022. We respectfully ask all members of the Committee to support HB 4022.

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Hilly Alexander  
Wilsonville, Clackamas County  
Director, Wilsonville Imagination Library