



## Imagination Library of Oregon

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

My name is Laurie McNichols, and I am the State Director for the Imagination Library of Oregon. I'm writing to express my strong support for HB 4022, codification of the Imagination Library of Oregon.

As we all know, early literacy is one of the strongest predictors of long-term academic success. Children who are not reading proficiently by the third grade are far more likely to struggle in later grades, disengage from school, and face limited economic opportunity. These challenges disproportionately affect children from low-income families, rural communities, and historically underserved populations.

The Imagination Library was designed to address these gaps by supporting children's first teachers: their families. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, the program has expanded from Dolly's home county to reach children and families in five countries.

Today, The Dollywood Foundation issued a press release sharing findings from the groundbreaking Global Research Study on the Imagination Library, the largest dataset ever conducted on shared book reading.

The study found that the Imagination Library is linked to stronger early literacy outcomes and richer reading experiences at home, helping close early literacy gaps by strengthening foundational skills, increasing the frequency of children being read to, and boosting children's interest and engagement during shared book reading.

In data from the study specific to the United States: children who participated in the Imagination library were 11 times more likely to be interested in books, 15 times more likely to join in during shared reading, 9 times more likely to initiate shared reading, and nearly 3 times more likely to demonstrate concepts about print, compared to children not in the program.

I have uploaded the Key Findings and USA Impact documents from the Global Research Study to OLIS for your review.

Codifying the Imagination Library will provide stability for the 56 partners in Oregon making the program available in their communities, and ensure that children and families don't lose this resource because of program uncertainty.

This is a responsible investment for Oregon because early literacy interventions reduce the need for costly remediation later on and deliver strong returns by improving educational attainment and workforce readiness.

In closing, I urge you to support HB 4022, a critical investment in Oregon's future.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie McNichols". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laurie" on the top line and the last name "McNichols" on the bottom line.

**Laurie McNichols**

State Director

Imagination Library of Oregon