

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

I'm reaching out as a proud Local Program Partner of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon (DPIIOR) to ask for your help in codifying our program into an Oregon statute. Please support **HB 4022**.

Did you see the front page article "**Survey: 4 in 10 Oregon kids aren't ready for kindergarten**" in The Oregonian on February 14, 2026? The article highlights that we must do better. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library regularly delivers books to the youngest children. Multiple studies have shown that participation in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library **increases kindergarten readiness** and improves third-grade reading proficiency.

Kids are excited about getting a book in the mail every month. They know what books are, recognize letters and numbers, and are interested in the stories. They also learn to sit still. One grandmother told me that *the only time her 2 year old grandson sits for more than a few minutes, is when they read his book together.*

DPIIOR makes brand new, age-appropriate books available (at no cost) to every Oregon child under age 5, in every zip code, regardless of income. Each book selected for the Imagination Library is vetted by the esteemed Blue Ribbon Book Selection Committee, a specially selected panel of early childhood literacy experts taking into consideration how each book meets the different needs of children as they grow from birth to age five.

Thanks to the State's investment and Local Program Partners, today we can say **over 73,000** Oregon children are enrolled. As of April 2025, we've achieved program coverage in every one of Oregon's 36 counties. The program benefits families in rural Oregon where access to books is limited.

Here in Wilsonville, we've seen the impact since 2012: Kids want to read their book right away when they find it in the mailbox. *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.*

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.

This is a proven, powerful public/private investment in Oregon children and it's one we cannot afford to lose. Please support **HB 4022** to keep the Imagination Library of Oregon going strong and available for Oregon's children for years to come.

Sincerely,
Hilly Alexander
Wilsonville, Clackamas County
Wilsonville Public Library Foundation, Director