



February 10, 2021

Re: Letter in Support of HB 5017

The Salem Public Library is a mid-sized municipal library with 1 small branch, serving a metropolitan area that includes the City of Salem, West Salem, Keizer, and outlying areas with a combined total of more than 200,000 citizens.

Over the years, the Oregon State Ready to Read grant has provided vital funding that has enabled the library to enhance early literacy collections to ensure they remain at sustainable levels to meet community demand. It has also provided necessary funding for the library's early literacy outreach and programming initiatives. These initiatives enable staff to demonstrate and model activities that help babies, toddlers, and preschoolers develop the literacy skills that they need to successfully begin Kindergarten.

In addition, Salem Public Library typically attracts more than 6,000 participants in our yearly Summer Reading Club. Ready to Read funds are essential in providing prizes and incentives, as well as high-quality summer performances both which attract families to the library, and encourage children and teens of all ages to continue to read, learn, and grow throughout the summer when many would otherwise be in danger of the summer slide.

This year, with COVID-19, we received many comments from families who appreciated that the library's Summer Reading Club brought a sense of normalcy to an otherwise unsettling year. Here are a few comments from community members:

- “Thank you for still putting this on with everything going on. It was a breath of normalcy for my kids.”
- “Thank you for encouraging reading, especially during this time of school and library closure!”
- “Dennis said “I LOVED it! (Thank you to everyone for all of the hard work that went into the program! It was so wonderful to feel like we had a piece of our normal summer.)”
- “Thank you for continuing this program. Was so important, especially this year.”
- “My child struggles to be motivated to read and yet is proud to log her time and see the badges! Thank you!”
- “The summer reading program was great as always. I'm so grateful you did it this year anyway. My kids needed something normal. Thank you!”
- “Las actividades sugeridas fueron muy divertidas.”
- “Thank you for keeping this going even during this uncertain time.”

Please continue to support this vital funding that enables libraries to serve their community in profound and meaningful ways.

Sincerely,

Jessica R. Marie, Youth Services Senior Librarian
Salem Public Library
Salem, OR