



Newport Public Library
Library Director's Office
35 NW Nye Street
Newport, OR 97365
541.574.0600

February 10, 2021

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I'm the Library Director for the Newport Public Library in Lincoln County, OR. I am here in support of HB 5017 and the State Library. Ready to Read grants are the only State General Fund program supporting Oregon's public libraries and help communities like mine support our youngest Oregonians. In 2020, my library received \$1,157 in Ready to Read grant funds.

Small, rural coastal Oregon libraries like Newport rely on the funding from the State Library to enhance the quality of programs and services our library can offer. This is even more true now during COVID-19.

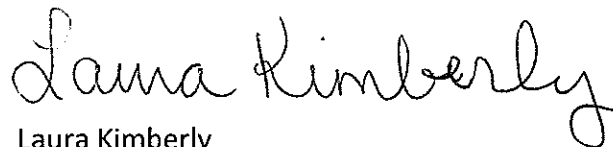
We have a 6-year-old library patron, Amelia who WAS a struggling reader. Through the funding from the Ready to Read grant, the public library was able to provide stimulating activities such as a Centennial Reading Challenge, STEAM library kits, bilingual book giveaways, stocking the local "Little Free Libraries," online programming, following the Meals on the Bus program, and a robust summer reading program. I'm excited to report that Amelia is no longer a struggling reader. She read an amazing 481 books during our year-long Centennial Book Challenge. Amelia's family reports, "She's excited that we get to keep on reading. She really thrived with the book challenge and her love of reading I think will stick - so awesome! It's an adventure and experience I don't think she'll ever forget." Amelia's story is just one of many in my community and around the state.

Ready to Read Funds also provided funding for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Lincoln County in 2020. This program gifts free books to children from birth to age five with funds from the Ready to Read grant.

While the State Library of Oregon hasn't made this request in their proposed budget, if the Legislature would consider a small increase from \$1.08 to \$1.50 per child, that would have a significant impact to our most vulnerable youth's mental health, enriching a child's experience, and more impactful to early literacy outcomes in our smallest and most rural libraries such as Yachats, Vernonia, Echo, and North Plains. In conclusion, I strongly urge you to invest in

additional funding to advance early childhood literacy, engage adolescents in reading activities, and support summer reading programs. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Kimberly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Kimberly
Newport Public Library Director
City of Newport
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