

HB 2872 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Prepared By: Matthew Perreault, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Oregon Imagination Library Project. Directs Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to develop, implement, and administer the project by ensuring that every enrolled child has monthly opportunity to receive a free, age-appropriate book. Provides that children aged four and older who have not started kindergarten are eligible to enroll and authorizes DELIC to enroll younger children if resources are sufficient. Authorizes DELIC to contract with, and require matching funds from, national organization that provides free books to children, school districts, tax-exempt nonprofit organizations, and other entities to operate program. Enables DELIC to convene advisory committee to solicit recommendations. Authorizes Early Learning Council to adopt rules to implement program. Establishes Oregon Imagination Library Account within Early Learning Division Fund. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2023.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library began in 1995 as a book gifting program for young children in Sevier County, Tennessee, in which every enrolled child under age 5 would receive a free, age-appropriate book each month, regardless of family income. Since then, the program has spread nationwide to every state and abroad to Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Ireland. The program partners with local libraries and community organizations as affiliates to enroll children and coordinate book delivery to families. Local affiliates enter enrollment information into a national database and transfers \$2.20 per child per month to the national organization, which sends books to each enrolled family at no cost to the family. According to several peer-reviewed studies, the program is associated with positive outcomes with regard to early literacy and kindergarten readiness.

House Bill 2872 establishes the Oregon Imagination Library Project and directs the Department of Early Learning and Care to implement the program by partnering with national and local organizations to deliver free books to children aged four and older who are not enrolled in kindergarten.