

Submitter: Meagan Rammell

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2872

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Scharf and Nguyer, and members of the House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Service,

My name is Meagan Rammell, and I currently reside in Eugene. I am writing in support of HB 2872. Growing up, I was an avid reader; my younger brother, however, did not share my passion for reading and has struggled with reading his entire life. Unfortunately, those struggles began at a very young age. They are partially due to a learning disability but can primarily be attributed to a lack of confidence as a reader. As an adult, he is intelligent, kind, and hardworking, but he has encountered many roadblocks throughout his life because of his low reading level.

I hope that provides a little background on why early childhood literacy has always been so important to me personally. During my pregnancy, I made a commitment to myself that I would prioritize spending time reading with my son, Easton, every day. Before he turned one, we began attending story time at our local library branch. It was there that we learned about the Imagination Library. I promptly signed Easton up, and he participated in the program for several years. Over the years of our participation in the program, our home library received over 40 books completely free of charge! The first book delivered was *The Little Engine That Could*, and it is still one of our favorite books to puff and chug along to. We have laughed along with the animals countless times when our pops baby frog in *The Giant Jumper*. So many of these books have brought joy into our home, starting with the surprise package and continuing with repeated reads together. It doesn't end there, though. We were building not only fond memories but also a foundation for strong reading skills that will serve my son forever. My son is currently in first grade and is participating in the highest reading group at school. I know Easton enjoys the reading experience now and believe it will continue into his future as he has begun choosing his own titles and reading independently. As a parent, I value time spent reading together and have been able to witness all of the benefits that come from doing so.

After my son graduated from the Imagination Library program in the fall of 2020, I joined the local Advisory Board to remain connected to this amazing program. During the past few years as an Advisory Board member, my primary focus has been on outreach. I keep a stack of fliers with the link to the enrollment website in my vehicle and look for opportunities to share the program with other families. Originally, we were limited in our outreach efforts due to the established library district boundaries, which made some Eugene residents ineligible to participate in the program. In 2021, we were able to partner with Northwest Community Credit Union for a five-year term and as a result, expand program eligibility to all of Lane County to fill the gaps! As amazing as that achievement was, I have had the opportunity to work with our neighboring and rural affiliates and have witnessed the financial constraints that were put on programs with the added publicity and expanded eligibility. HB 2872 would allow for the stabilization of the program and continued outreach efforts statewide.

In addition to serving on the Advisory Board, I am also a donor to our local affiliate and enjoy having the opportunity to pay it forward by sponsoring more children, knowing they will surely get as much satisfaction out of the program as we have. HB 2872 would allow my individual contributions, as well as those of others, to reach even more families.

Our family owes a big thank you to Dolly Parton, the Imagination Library, and our local affiliate for fostering a love for reading and helping to make it fun and available to our community. If HB 2872 is passed, all the children in the state could be beneficiaries of the same opportunity. Many thanks to the committee for taking the time to read over my thoughts. Please support HB 2872.

Kind regards,

Meagan Rammell

