

## HB 2811 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

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**Action Date:** 02/11/25

**Action:** Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

**Vote:** 6-0-3-0

**Yeas:** 6 - Elmer, Hartman, Javadi, McIntire, Nosse, Scharf

**Exc:** 3 - Nguyen H, Ruiz, Walters

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Taylor Bickel, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 1/30, 2/11

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Imagination Library of Oregon Program to provide a free book each month to eligible children and directs the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to implement the program.

#### Detailed Summary

- Defines "eligible children" as children from birth through age five residing in Oregon.
- Establishes the Imagination Library of Oregon Program to provide a free book each month to eligible children, encourage children to develop a love of reading and learning, and improve third grade reading proficiency and high school graduation rates.
- Directs the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to implement the program by contracting with a nonprofit entity.
- Specifies requirements for the nonprofit entity to promote and manage the book-gifting program.
- Permits the Early Learning Council to adopt rules to implement the provisions of the measure.
- Establishes the Oregon Imagination Library Account within the Department of Early Learning and Care Fund.
- Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2025.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Current Imagination Library of Oregon program, including legislative history and state investment in the program
- Social barriers to literacy
- Brain development and learning in childhood
- Number of Oregon children who read at grade level or have access to books at home

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

#### BACKGROUND:

[Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) is a book gifting program that provides a free, age-appropriate book to children ages birth through five, regardless of their family's income, each month. The program launched in 1995 to distribute books to children living in Sevier County, Tennessee, and has since spread to every state nationwide and abroad to Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Ireland. The program partners with local organizations in selected coverage areas to enroll children and coordinate book delivery to families. Local affiliates enter enrollment information into a national database and transfer \$2.20 per child per month to the national organization, which mails a book to each enrolled child at no cost to the family.

In 2023, the Legislature considered [House Bill 2872 A](#), which would have established the Oregon Imagination Library Program and directed the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to partner with a national

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organization that works through local partners to deliver free books to children. HB 2872 A was not enacted. However, in 2023, the Legislature appropriated \$1.7 million in funding through [Senate Bill 5506](#) to DELC to administer the [Imagination Library program in Oregon](#).