

Submitter: Brooke Fisher-Clark  
On Behalf Of: Imagination Library of Washington  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2811

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a powerful early literacy tool that connects children with their loved ones, helps to build their own home library, and develops essential skills to prepare children for kindergarten and beyond. This program is the number one early literacy program in the nation and has over 4 million children enrolled in the U.S. Dolly Parton started this program back in 1995 inspired by her father who wasn't able to read or write, and it is now in five countries, and present in all fifty states with 21 of them being legislatively passed programs. As Executive Director of Imagination Library of Washington, I am grateful our program became a legislatively passed program in June 2022, becoming the first on the west coast and 11th in the nation. California was next on the west coast to receive this legislative support, and we hope to see full completion of a unified west coast supporting this program for our children with Oregon. Washington has over 120,000 children enrolled, has full statewide program coverage, and hosted Dolly Parton herself for a statewide celebration in August 2023. I see these same milestones and accomplishments in the future for Oregon with full coverage, a strong enrollment, and a celebration to come. This program is a win for all involved, with the benefits of improved kindergarten readiness, children thriving through their academic journey, improved health and health equity, and saved taxpayer dollars. This program removes all barriers to books and positively uplifts households. I say this often, that if you invest upstream into an early literacy program like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, you have the most powerful chance to put children on course for a successful future. Oregon legislators, you have the power to pass something that would be transformational not only for Oregon children, but in the long-term transformational in creating a more vibrant, thriving Oregon State. I hope this inspires your support to HB 2811.