

January 28, 2025

Representative Annessa Hartman
900 Court St., NE, H-487
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Hartman:

Re: HB 2811 Imagination Library of Oregon Program

As a retired educator and Title 1 Reading teacher, I am writing to express support for HB 2811. Research indicates that families reading together can foster an interest in learning among young children and strengthen family bonds. Access to a variety of books at home significantly contributes to this experience. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides free books to all children aged 0-5 in Oregon.

Since July 2022, I have been enrolling children in Marion and Polk Counties for the Marion and Polk Early Learning Hub affiliate. During community events, families who participate in the program often express their appreciation for the books their children receive. Parents frequently mention that their children look forward to receiving a book addressed to them by mail. Many parents also note that reading has become an established bedtime routine, promoting consistency within the family.

All children should have the opportunity to have books in the home, but many families can't afford to buy books for their children. Early exposure to reading is important for developing vocabulary, comprehension, and pre-reading skills, which are essential for a child's readiness for kindergarten. Children who read well can also learn and succeed, turning into well educated, productive adult members of society.

Please consider voting "YES!" for the passage of this bill to ensure that affiliates receive a 50% match as we work to enroll all young children in Oregon in this program.

Sincerely,



Kathy Martell, Retired Educator
Member of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International of Women Educators
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