



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

January 30, 2025

To: [Rep. Annessa Hartman](#), Chair
[House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services](#)

Re: [HB 2811](#) – Related to the establishment of the Imagination Library of Oregon program – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon strongly supports HB 2811, based on our position that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. We believe that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life.

The Imagination Library is an outstanding example of a literacy program that works. It successfully promotes equality of educational opportunity and greatly increases reading readiness and later educational success for pre-school children. The simple premise is that children from ages 0 to 5 receive an age-appropriate book each month at absolutely no cost to their parents. This program is made possible through the largesse of the Dolly Parton Foundation, which provides 50% of the funding, and is currently thriving in 22 US states, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and the Republic of Ireland. As of 2024, over 264 million books have been gifted to children since the inception of the foundation in 2000.

In Oregon, only a handful of those eligible are enrolled in the Imagination Library Project through individual community efforts. The establishment of the Oregon Imagination Library Account within the Department of Early Learning and Care Fund would expand this proven project to many more children throughout the state. We have no doubt it will be especially valuable in those areas of the state where access to books for young children is limited.

It is no secret that [reading scores have plummeted in recent years in our state](#). We firmly believe this program can be a fairly low-cost way to boost scores and instill a love of reading at a critical time in a child's life. Not all the funding needs to come from state coffers, however, since a provision in the bill develops a statewide marketing and communication plan to allow for solicitation of donations, gifts, and other funding to support the program.

League members have witnessed the success of the Imagination Library in their communities for many years, and there is no better time than the present to expand it to a statewide program. We strongly urge your support for HB 2811.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bentson".

Lisa Bentson
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee Member