



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

January 30, 2025

Dear Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, and House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee Members,

I am happy to submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 2811, which codifies in statute Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon Program. I want to express my deep gratitude to House Majority Leader Ben Bowman for his leadership and steadfast commitment to advancing early literacy opportunities for Oregon's youngest learners by introducing this initiative in 2023.

As Governor of the State of Oregon and Superintendent of Public Instruction, I believe that every child deserves access to books from the very beginning of their lives. My administration remains fully committed to the \$2.2 million General Fund allocation in the Governor's Recommended Budget, paired with private matching funds to cement this program, ensuring all children from birth to age five can build home libraries that inspire a lifelong love of reading.

HB 2811 authorizes the Department of Early Learning and Care to contract with a nonprofit entity to administer the Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Oregon program. This initiative will:

- Provide a 50% state match for books and mailing costs;
- Promote program access to families statewide; and
- Establish a community donation structure to expand the program's reach.

With these matching funds, we have the opportunity to increase participation from 29% of eligible children to 65%, expanding access across all 36 counties in Oregon. By investing in early literacy, we can effectively set our children up for success, ensuring they have the tools needed to thrive in early education, school, and beyond.

By supporting HB 2811, we can make a critical investment in our children's future and in the long-term educational outcomes for Oregon. I urge you to join me in championing this effort and ensuring that every young child in Oregon has the opportunity to develop a love of reading from the very start.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Oregon's children and families.

Sincerely,

Governor Tina Kotek