



Dear Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf and members of the House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee

My name is Kaylee Chrystal, and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 2811. I am the Community Engagement Coordinator for Imagination Library of Oregon, where I support 56 local program partners across the state and work on expansion efforts with state director Laurie McNichols.

Over the past 6 months in my role, I have witnessed firsthand the time, dedication, and transformative impacts of our Local Program Partners (LPPs) in bringing the Imagination Library to their communities. Their primary roles include enrolling children, covering the cost of books and mailing, and promoting the program locally. Without their support, this program would not be possible.

In the fall I had the opportunity to meet with several LPPs in person. One of the first places I got to visit was the community of Lowell, Oregon. Lowell is a small rural town of 1,100 people outside of Springfield, Oregon in Lane County. I learned that their local library was damaged by a winter storm in 2019 and was unusable between 2019 and 2023. During this time, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library became the primary resource for providing books to children in their community.

The Imagination Library has had a significant impact on their community, gifting 2,590 books since 2015. This is one of many examples on how the Imagination Library benefits all children and their families, regardless of socioeconomic status or background.

In November, the United Way of the Columbia Willamette (UWCW) became our newest LPP, filling the coverage gap in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. This provided 67,000 eligible children access to the program that previously weren't able to enroll. In only three months, UWCW has enrolled 7,500 children in their program, making it the largest LPP by enrollment in Oregon. The state match has been crucial in enabling UWCW and other local partners to reach more children and families.

On behalf of all our LPPs, I want to thank the state of Oregon and DELC for their dedication to early literacy and their role in bringing books into the hands of children. Please support the continuation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Oregon by voting yes on 2811.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaylee Chrystal".

Kaylee Chrystal

Community Engagement Coordinator