

House Bill 2247

Introduced and printed pursuant to House Rule 12.00. Pre-session filed (at the request of House Interim Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Directs Early Learning Division to develop, implement and administer Oregon Imagination Library Project to improve reading proficiency and high school graduation rates by providing enrolled children with age-appropriate book once each month.

Establishes Oregon Imagination Library Account within Early Learning Division Fund for purposes of funding project.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to encouragement of reading in young children; and declaring an emergency.

3 Whereas Oregon ranks third worst in the country in high school graduation rates; and

4 Whereas learning to read by third grade is a key indicator for future high school completion,
5 but less than half of Oregon's third grade students meet proficiency benchmarks in reading; and

6 Whereas at kindergarten entry, 37 percent of Oregon children are unable to recognize a single
7 letter and an even higher percentage cannot recognize a single letter sound; and

8 Whereas parents have the greatest impact on the lives of their children; and

9 Whereas according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the single most important activity
10 an adult can engage in to prepare a child for a life of learning is to read frequently with the child,
11 preferably every day; and

12 Whereas there is a direct correlation between the number of books in the home and future ac-
13 ademic success; and

14 Whereas mailing books each month to preschool children has been shown to dramatically in-
15 crease the percentage of families reading to their children and the frequency of parents reading to
16 children; and

17 Whereas sending age-appropriate books to preschool children is the broadest and most cost-
18 effective way to elevate early literacy benchmarks; and

19 Whereas preschool children enrolled in a program that sends a book to them each month score
20 higher on kindergarten readiness assessments; now, therefore,

21 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

22 **SECTION 1. (1) The Oregon Imagination Library Project is established for the purpose**
23 **of improving third-grade reading proficiency and high school graduation rates by providing**
24 **free books to young children in this state.**

25 **(2)(a) The Early Learning Division shall develop, implement and administer the project.**
26 **The division shall ensure that, under the project, every enrolled child has the opportunity**
27 **to receive an age-appropriate book each month.**

28 **(b) A child is eligible to be enrolled if the child is at least four years of age and has not**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 started kindergarten.

2 (c) Notwithstanding paragraph (b) of this subsection, the division may determine that
3 children younger than four years of age may be eligible to be enrolled if resources are
4 available to enroll younger children.

5 (3) For the purpose of administering the project, the division may enter into a contract
6 with:

7 (a) A national book gifting foundation that works in collaboration with local nonprofit
8 organizations and government agencies to provide free books to children from birth until the
9 children begin school.

10 (b) One or more school districts, nonprofit organizations or other entities that are ex-
11 empt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to collaborate with
12 the division to:

13 (A) Provide outreach to local communities about the project;

14 (B) Recruit volunteers to assist in the implementation and administration of the project;

15 (C) Solicit donations, gifts and other funding to financially support the project;

16 (D) Develop a process for enrolling children in the project; or

17 (E) Enroll children in the project.

18 (4) The division may require that any nonprofit organization or other entity that is ex-
19 empt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and that enters into
20 a contract with the division provide a matching amount of at least 50 percent of the funds
21 required to carry out the project as described in the contract.

22 (5) The division may create an advisory committee to advise the division and make rec-
23 ommendations on how best to develop, implement and administer the project.

24 (6) The Early Learning Council, in consultation with the division, may adopt rules to
25 implement the provisions of this section.

26 **SECTION 2.** (1) The Oregon Imagination Library Account is established within the Early
27 Learning Division Fund. Separate records shall be maintained for moneys in the account.
28 Interest earned by the account shall be credited to the account.

29 (2) Moneys in the account are continuously appropriated to the Early Learning Division
30 for the Oregon Imagination Library Project described in section 1 of this 2019 Act.

31 **SECTION 3.** This 2019 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public
32 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2019 Act takes effect
33 on its passage.

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