

February 10, 2022

To: House Ways & Means Committee

I am writing to support HB 383 – Young Readers Enhancement Act. This bill suggests that matching funds for existing Dolly Patron Imagination Library affiliates in the state of Maryland be provided. If approved, this bill would provide much needed funds to DPIL affiliates.

The Imagination Library of Allegany County has been in existence for ten years. In those ten years we have witnessed 3,805 children graduate from the program, mailed more than 223,104 books to registered children and currently are serving 1,921 children. A great number of children registered are from low-income families and receive books through our program that they may not otherwise receive. Matching funds to our program would allow us to continue to provide books to those children already registered and could expand our ability to register more children. We have a goal of 2,000 or more children receiving books monthly.

As the Executive Director of County United Way, Inc., I know how important early childhood education is to the success of children in school. As the lead organization and program administrator of the Imagination Library of Allegany County, I know how important it is to be able to go to the underserved areas of our County to sign children up for this program. HB 383 would provide the opportunity to us to provide expanded services to the underserved population in our community.

Please support HB 383 so that we can help level the playing field for all the children in the state of Maryland. Thank you for your consideration.

*Michele*

Michele Walker

Executive Director

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