

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County

P.O. Box 5, North East, Maryland 21901

Website: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/affilitate/MDCECIL/>

To: The Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Re: Senate Bill 438, Young Readers Program - Expansion Act

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I am the leader of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County, which was established in September 2019. Our small group of hard-working volunteers started with only 22 registrations that first year, and we're proud to have 716 local children receiving books this month, less than two and a half years later.

Cecil County, MD has approximately 5,800 residents under the age of five. Our goal for 2022 is to increase our registration to cover 20% of these children, or about 1,160 books going out each month. To do so, we must register more than 400 new preschoolers before the end of the year, almost doubling the size of our impact on our community.

Our 2022 action plan reflects the steps we need to reach this goal. We have three registration events scheduled. The first will be this spring in Conowingo, and we're securing locations for events in the summer and fall. Historically, we register between 25 and 50 new kids per event. We also register an average of 25 children each month from forms mailed to us in response to our regular canvassing on social media.

We can reach the children; we know that. The unknown variable is: "Will we receive enough in donations to fund the goal?"

Our volunteers spend their time planning and manning registration events, publicizing the program, bookkeeping, and all the other administrative tasks required to run any organization. But it's the fundraising that allows us to get more books into the hands of more children.

Matching funds will help us reach our goal this year, without a doubt. Our action plan includes a letter campaign to our past donors, and we'd love to be able to incentivize them with a match.

Receiving funds that support accelerated growth will also help us attract more volunteers to our ranks. They will see DPIL of Cecil County continue our path of growth and will add to our local impact. This year we added an Event Planner to our team and also increased our social media presence, doubling our online following.

We are poised to continue the growth that this proven program deserves, and we're passionate about helping Maryland develop young readers.

Sincerely,

**Donna Bitely, Main Coordinator
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Cecil County**