

# **SB 108 Oral Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ashley Teagle

Position: FAV



# Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

*Advancing Library Excellence*

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My name is Ashley Teagle and I'm the CEO of the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association which provides support services to our public library partners in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Thank you to Senator Ellis for sponsoring Senate Bill 108 which will provide Charles County Public Library's Imagination Library with funding.

Charles County Public Library's Imagination Library launched in October 2021 and there are currently over 1,000 children under the age of five receiving a free book each month delivered to their door. This important program builds on the library's existing 500 by 5 Early Literacy Program which encourages children to read 500 books by 5 years old. As noted on the library's website, there are numerous benefits to exposing young children to books and reading including: helping parents build a stronger relationship with their child; increasing basic speech and communication skills; improving logical thinking; increasing vocabulary; enhancing concentration and discipline; helping to ease transitions to major milestones; and promoting school readiness.

According to the Maryland State Department of Education's 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report, only 44% of kindergarteners in Charles County demonstrated readiness to engage in the kindergarten curriculum which is less than the state average of 47%. Charles County Public Library is an excellent community partner to help close this achievement gap for young children.

According to the Office of Head Start's Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, books not only benefit babies and toddlers before they learn how to talk—older children benefit as well. "Books provide a great opportunity for back-and-forth interactions with older children. This supports word learning and preliteracy skills."

Numerous studies have demonstrated no downside to exposing young children to books and reading. According to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library website: "Some studies found Dolly Parton's Imagination Library had promise with respect to developing children's early literacy skills, as participants had more advanced skills than their classmates who did not participate in the program."

Additionally, I would direct your attention to Governor Hogan's Young Readers Initiative in Baltimore City. A press release for the Governor's Young Readers Program said: "Statistics and independent reports have shown Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has dramatically improved early childhood literacy and reading scores for those enrolled."

I am hopeful the benefits of this great program will persuade you to not only fund Charles County Public Library's Imagination Library but to consider funding this program statewide to benefit children everywhere in Maryland. Thank you.

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Position: FAV



# Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

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February 2, 2022

The Honorable Arthur Ellis  
Maryland State Senator for District 28  
James Senate Office Building, Room 302  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 108 – Charles County Public Library – Imagination Library Program - Funding

Dear Senator Ellis,

The Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA) supports early childhood literacy and the efforts of the Charles County Public Library (CCPL) to launch the Charles County Imagination Library under the leadership of Executive Director Mr. KennethWayne Thompson.

According to the Maryland State Department of Education's 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report, only 44% of kindergarteners in Charles County demonstrated readiness to engage in the kindergarten curriculum which is less than the state average of 47% (Education, Maryland State Department of). COVID-19 interruptions to education are estimated to have increased the number of students who experience reading difficulties by 20% according to a study by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (100 million more children fail basic reading skills because of COVID-19, 2021).

Mr. Thompson understands the critical role public libraries provide in exposing children ages birth to five to reading. Additionally, the caregivers of preschoolers benefit from the expertise of librarians who select age appropriate books and activities to keep children engaged during story times. Once caregivers are home, the Charles County Imagination Library mails a new book to the child's home monthly until the age of five. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library says: "Some studies found Dolly Parton's Imagination Library had promise with respect to developing children's early literacy skills, as participants had more advanced skills than their classmates who did not participate in the program" (Supportive Research: Exploring How the Imagination Library Impacts Communities, 2022).

The Charles County Imagination Library is a natural continuation of CCPL's preschool programming. By helping children develop their own personal library collection at home, traditional barriers to access such as transportation to the library, are removed by shipping books directly to the home. As part of CCPL's long term strategy to develop lifelong readers, the Charles County Imagination Library can help close the achievement gap in Charles County and support children entering kindergarten get ready to engage in learning.

Sincerely,

Ashley Teagle, CEO

**SB108\_ashleyteagle\_fav-2.pdf**

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Position: FAV



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## [500 by 5 Early Literacy Program](#)

“The Charles County Public Library is dedicated to doing our part in our community to get every child ready to read. The 500 by Five initiative inspires children to read 500 books by 5 years old. Reading daily builds a stronger relationship with your child, increases basic speech and communication skills, improves logical thinking, increases vocabulary, enhances concentration and discipline, helps ease transitions to major milestones, promotes school readiness, encourages a love of learning, and it is just plain fun!”

## [Governor Larry Hogan Announces “Governor’s Young Readers” Initiative in Baltimore City](#)

“Statistics and independent reports have shown Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has dramatically improved early childhood literacy and reading scores for those enrolled.”

## [The Importance of Reading to Your Children](#)

The seven benefits of reading to children include: supported cognitive development; improved language skills; preparation for academic success; developing a special bond with your child; increased concentration and discipline; improved imagination and creativity; cultivating lifelong love of reading.

## [Read It Again! Benefits of Reading to Young Children](#)

- “Books provide a great opportunity for back-and-forth interactions with older children. This supports word learning and preliteracy skills.”
- “It is important to use new and different words for children to expand their vocabulary. Books often include words that adults would not otherwise use, like names of plants or animals.”
- “Dialogic reading is a type of interactive reading. When adults ask children questions, explain new vocabulary, and relate the story to a child’s life, they are engaged in dialogic reading. This helps young children develop important preliteracy skills, like story understanding and critical thinking.”

## [The Surprising \(and Scientifically Proven\) Benefit of Reading to Toddlers](#)

“Other studies show that shared reading also helps foster healthy brain development in babies and toddlers. That’s why pediatricians now ‘prescribe’ regular reading with babies and young children. For a baby, one billion new neural connections are made every second, building on themselves until 90% of the brain is developed by age five. It’s these pathways, or connections, that enable us to think, speak, and even move our bodies. The more connections the better, and one of the best ways to foster the development of these neural pathways is through reading. This study also fits, in my mind, with other research that shows that reading to young children helps make them more empathetic. When we read aloud to our kids, we use different words and sounds to express a wide variety of emotions. Regular exposure to this practice helps little listeners better understand their own feelings and the emotions of others.”

**SB 108 Testimony SMRLA.docx (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wendell

Position: FAV



# Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc.

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**SB 108 Written Testimony CCPL signed (2).pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wendell

Position: FAV

January 26, 2022

Senator Paul Pinsky  
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
11 Bladen Street  
2 West- Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 108 Charles County Public Library Imagination Library Program Funding-Support

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Honored Committee Members:

Charles County Public Library supports SB 108 which would provide funding for children of Charles County between birth and age five to receive a book every month from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The bill would provide for the cost of the program which is \$2.10 per child per month and expand the impact of literacy not only for children but for their families as well.

Research has shown that the most critical years for brain development are from prenatal to age five. Many children in Maryland face obstacles and barriers that impede their optimal learning environment. High quality learning experiences during the critical early years are pivotal to children's success in school, overall well-being, and prospects in life. Incorporating book distribution programs such as the Imagination Library can assist parents with coaching their child's language environment and have been shown to positively influence a child's access to language rich interactions.

Maryland State Department of Education's 2019-2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment indicates the majority of kindergartners, 53%, do not demonstrate all of the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to be successful when entering school and that 21% of kindergartners are "emerging" readiness, and will require targeted supports or interventions to be successful in kindergarten. The Imagination Library book gifting program is a national model that would provide literacy support to our young Maryland learners.

SB 108 provides the much needed funding support for the Imagination Library program (<https://www.ccplonline.org/imagination-library/>) to expand access to richer home literacy environments, promote positive attitudes about reading, and increase emerging literacy skills for improved kindergarten readiness. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Maryland libraries.

Sincerely,

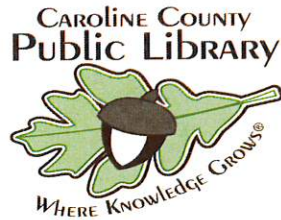


KennethWayne Thompson  
Executive Director, Charles County Public Library

**SB108 letter of support\_CaroCoPubLib (3).pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wendell

Position: FAV



January 20, 2022

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB108 Charles County Public Library Imagination Library Program funding

This letter is in support of SB108 to assist Charles County Public Library to provide all children aged 0-5 in Charles County the opportunity to enroll in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), a book gifting program that mails free, high quality books to children, from birth to age five, no matter their family's income.

Caroline County Public Library is the agency in Caroline County which manages DPIL in Caroline County. We began our program in 2015 and have been fortunate to have strong Caroline County partners to both promote it and find funding for it. We are a small county and average around 1250 active participants (aged 0-5) with over 1,631 children having graduated as of January 2021. Also as of January 2021, there were a total of 69,316 Imagination Library books in Caroline County homes. The impact of this program is huge. I believe it brings a measure of equity to all children being ready for kindergarten. There are studies that state that there is a correlation between enrollment in DPIL and a child's Kindergarten readiness assessment score.

Thankfully, we have never had to put a child on a waiting list. I understand that Charles County Public Library has just recently begun the program in Charles County and its team members are working to create a secure funding base so that they never have to turn a child away from the program due to lack of funds. Serving a much larger county than ours with many more children aged 0-5 to serve is a much bigger challenge than what we faced and continue to manage.

I see this as an opportunity for the State to partner with Charles County Public Library to help build a robust and sustaining DPIL program in Charles County to help prepare their children for kindergarten and put them on a path to a successful education.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett  
Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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Central Library  
100 Market Street  
Denton, Maryland 21629  
p 410.479.1343 f 410.479.1443

Federalsburg Branch  
123 Morris Avenue  
Federalsburg, Maryland 21632  
p 410.754.8397 f 410.754.3058

North County Branch  
101 Cedar Lane • P.O. Box 336  
Greensboro, Maryland 21639  
p 410.482.2173 f 410.482.2634

**SMCL Support for SB108.docx (3).pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wendell

Position: FAV



January 18, 2022

To: Paul Pinsky, Chair, Maryland's Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB 108: Supporting

Dear Chairman Pinsky and distinguished member of the Committee,

I am writing to you in support of SB108, which would provide support for Charles County Public Library to support its community through the Imagination Library (<https://imaginationlibrary.com/>).

This is a great "book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income." It is well-established and has already provided over 172 million books internationally. Children at an age vital for creating a habit of life-time learning will receive a free book each. While all children will benefit, this program would especially benefit children in less economically advantaged families. Many of these children may not have a book of their own. One of the great blessings of my time working in libraries has been to see the joy that such children have when they do get books. They want to read the books over and over, ask their parents to read with them, and develop the excitement in reading that is the foundation of much later academic achievement.

Study after study shows that the greatest brain growth occurs in our early years, that children who speak with and read with their parents have a huge advantage in learning, and that early childhood development fosters a lifetime of success ( <https://ferstreaders.org/resources/fifty-top-literacy-statistics>). Your support of this bill will ensure that all children in Charles County have that advantage, building success for themselves, their county, and Maryland. I strongly encourage you to support this bill. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further testimony.

Michael Blackwell, Director, St. Mary's County Library

Administrative Offices  
23630 Hayden Farm Lane  
Leonardtown, MD 20650  
301-475-2151  
FAX: 301-884-4415  
info@stmalib.org

Charlotte Hall Library  
37600 New Market Road  
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622  
301-884-2211  
FAX: 301-884-2113  
hall.manager@stmalib.org

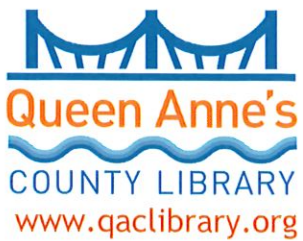
Leonardtown Library  
23630 Hayden Farm Lane  
Leonardtown, MD 20650  
301-475-2846  
FAX: 301-884-4415  
stma.manager@stmalib.org

Lexington Park Library  
21677 FDR Blvd  
Lexington Park, MD 20653  
301-863-8188  
FAX: 301-863-2550  
lexi.manager@stmalib.org

**Support Letter SB 108 - QACL - Janet Salazar (2).p**

Uploaded by: Brenda Wendell

Position: FAV



Centreville 121 South Commerce St., Centreville, MD, 21617 | 410-758-0980

Kent Island 200 Library Circle, Stevensville, MD, 21666 | 410-643-8161

January 21, 2022

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Pinsky, Senator Kagan, and Honored Committee Members:

I am writing in support of SB 108: Charles County Public Library - Imagination Library Program – Funding. As the Director of the Queen Anne's County Library I have first-hand knowledge of the impact participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has on a child's ability to enter school ready to learn. In 2018 we were fortunate to partner with our local Judy Center to provide access to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for our under 5 population. The impact was significant. In the 2017/2018 school year, 48% of Queen Anne's County children entered kindergarten ready to learn. Just one year later, after implementing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, 57% of Queen Anne's County children entered kindergarten ready to learn, an increase of 18.75%. Studies show that the single most important activity parents can do to get their children ready to read and learn is to read out loud them. The number of words a child knows upon entering school is a key indicator of future school success. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library puts the books into the hands of parents so they can model reading as a behavior and increase their children's vocabulary.

The cost of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library can be a detriment to a library's ability to participate in the program. For every child enrolled in the program, the cost is \$25 per year until the child ages out at 5 years old. Committing to the program means making hard decisions about other services that may not have resources to continue. The funding in this bill will be crucial to the Charles County Public Library's ability to provide this program.

I ask the committee to support SB 108 and to also consider expanding the bill so that all Maryland Public Libraries will have this funding available to support participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library statewide.

Sincerely,

Janet Salazar  
Director

Queen Anne's County Library



**Senate Bill 108 - Testimony, LGreely CCPL.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lee Greely

Position: FAV

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 108, Charles County Public Library – Imagination Library Program – Funding. My name is Lee Greely and I am the Development Manager with the Charles County Public Library and I am writing today in support of this bill. In my role, I work with our community to help expand our library's impact through donations, grants, and other funding opportunities and partnerships.

The Imagination Library of Charles County was formally launched by the Charles County Public Library in October of 2021 in partnership with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association. In three and a half short months, the number of children enrolled is currently at 1,092, which has already exceeded the total number of projected registrations for the entire first year of the program with over eight months of registrations still to come. This incredible response to the program shows not only the impact of the launch of this program in the community but also the need for it as well. By implementing this program we are fulfilling our Mission and Vision at the Charles County Public Library of being the trusted source for connecting EVERYONE to endless possibilities by supporting the creation of a lifelong love of reading and helping to ensure ALL children in Charles County are school-ready when they enter kindergarten and the endless possibilities that await them.

This program removes so many barriers that many in the community face by being open to all children from birth to five years of age and by mailing the books directly to their house. There are no transportation barriers, no time barriers of making time to come to the library or another location to find books, and because there is no cost to the participants in the program there is no financial barrier of entry either. Providing equitable access to youth literacy is something that the Charles County Public Library is always focused on, and this program is one that allows us to expand that impact.

The passing of Senate Bill 108 would guarantee the sustained presence of this impactful program for youth in Charles County for years to come. Additionally, funding for the Imagination Library program would allow for the allocation of all other library funding from donors, grants, partner organizations, and other sources to go to additional impactful programs and initiatives. Without this funding, a large percentage of our yearly donations and incredible support from organizations such as the Citizens for the Charles County Public Library would be directed towards the funding sustainability of this program.

The impacts to the community of Charles County through the funding of this one program would be felt far beyond just youth literacy because of the ability it would create for the maximizing of other funding by the library and the ability to utilize other resources to execute additional outreach programs in Charles County.

Thank you again for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Lee Greely