

House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear House Ways and Means 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 five short months, the number of children enrolled is currently at 1,266, 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