

March 22, 2022

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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

Dear 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