



Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
SB300 - Baltimore Young Readers Program - Expansion and Alterations (Young Readers Program Expansion Act of 2023)
February 22, 2023
Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Committee Members:

This letter is in support of SB300 for a Statewide Young Readers Program.

Caroline County Public Library is the agency in Caroline County which manages Dolly Parton's Imagination Library 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 1,932 children having graduated as of January 2023. Also as of January 2023, we have provided a total of 98,000 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, to-date we have never had to put a child on a waiting list. I understand that other Maryland programs have had to turn a child away from the program due to lack of funds.

I see this as an opportunity for the State to partner with Maryland public libraries and their affiliates to help build robust and sustaining young readers programs for all of Maryland's children to help prepare them for kindergarten and put them on a path to a successful education.

Sincerely,

Debby Bennett
Executive Director

info@carolib.org • www.carolib.org

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