

Presidents' Statement on Indiana Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Funding

The Indiana Library Federation opposes the complete elimination of funding for Indiana's Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) from HB1001. Public libraries have been working hard in support of increasing access to this program for all Hoosiers from birth until age five. In 2023, there was overwhelming bipartisan support for SEA 340 at the Statehouse to fund 50% of the cost necessary for universal access. Although there were some local programs prior to 2023, the State of Indiana's bold move to support early literacy access to all Indiana's youngest Hoosiers led to an explosion of the popular program, supporting efforts to increase literacy rates.

In 2023, public libraries answered the challenge to amplify existing programs jump-starting the new statewide initiative. Indiana's public libraries historically have provided barrier-free access to early literacy programs and resources, and public libraries led the efforts in organizing new local coalitions to raise the remaining 50% of the funds. The collaborative efforts brought together local non-profits, library foundations, community foundations, and individual funders needed to answer the mandate of SEA 340.

Ending state funding for Indiana's Dolly Parton's Imagination Library would cause you to sing, *"It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it."*

- No state has ever pulled funding after entering into an agreement with the Dollywood Foundation since its creation 30 years ago
- Eliminating this program would negate the literacy gains of the last 2 years
- As of February 2024, there were 124,992 children enrolled in the DPIL program
- Since August 2023, the announcement of the statewide expansion, over 1.8 million books have been gifted
- Currently 89 of 92 Indiana counties have universal access to the program
- Increase in public library visits by families participating in DPIL program
- Home library ownership promotes children's positive attitudes toward reading
- Reading together helps to create a bond, a unique, shared experience, and provides connection between child and caregiver
- DPIL access leads to improved Kindergarten readiness, leading to future school success

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