

**Second Regular Session  
Seventy-second General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO  
CORRECTED INTRODUCED**

LLS NO. 20-0911.01 Shelby Ross x4510

**SENATE BILL 20-185**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Bridges and Tate**, Coram, Donovan, Fields, Garcia, Lee, Lundeen, Priola, Rankin, Rodriguez, Todd, Williams A., Winter

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Tipper and Wilson**,

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**Senate Committees**  
Education

**House Committees**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE COLORADO IMAGINATION**  
102      **LIBRARY PROGRAM.**

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**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

The bill requires the state librarian in the department of education (department) to contract with a Colorado nonprofit organization (contractor) for the creation and operation of the Colorado imagination library program (program). The contractor shall manage the daily operations of the program, including but not limited to:

!      Establishing county-based affiliate programs in all

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

- Colorado counties and city and counties;
- ! Advancing and strengthening the affiliate programs to ensure enrollment growth;
- ! Developing, promoting, and coordinating a public awareness campaign to make donors aware of the opportunity to donate to the affiliate program and make the public aware of the opportunity to register eligible children to receive books through the program; and
- ! Contracting with a national nonprofit foundation that exists for the sole purpose of working with local entities to identify eligible children and mail age-appropriate, high-quality books each month to those children at no cost to families.

The bill requires the contractor to submit a report to the department which shall then submit the report to the general assembly on the total number of eligible children in each county or city and county in Colorado and how many eligible children are enrolled in the program in each county or city and county.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2           **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4           (a) A child's early years play a pivotal role in the child's literacy  
5 abilities. Literacy skills learned between birth and age 5 often predict  
6 literacy in later years. Children who struggle with literacy in kindergarten  
7 through third grade are unlikely to catch up to their peers, and the  
8 proficiency gap widens as students grow older.

9           (b) In 2019, the National Assessment of Educational Progress  
10 (NAEP) indicated that just 40% of Colorado students in fourth grade  
11 could read proficiently;

12           (c) NAEP results also demonstrate that Colorado has not made  
13 progress in improving literacy among historically underserved students.  
14 Similar to NAEP results in 1998, in 2019, Colorado's African American  
15 and Hispanic and Latino fourth graders saw average reading scores that

1 were 24 and 27 points lower, respectively, than the average score of their  
2 Caucasian peers. Also similar to results in 1998, in 2019, Colorado  
3 children from low-income families saw an average reading score that was  
4 30 points lower than higher income students.

5 (d) Access to printed reading materials is a key component in  
6 ensuring literacy among young children. Children with more exposure to  
7 printed reading materials excel in comprehension, technical reading, and  
8 spelling.

9 (e) Children in many of Colorado's small rural school districts on  
10 the eastern side of the state do not have access to a public library and  
11 therefore see zero per-student circulation of child reading materials  
12 through a library;

13 (f) Some larger rural school districts with larger percentages of  
14 children living in poverty and children of color have only one public  
15 library to serve their student populations and therefore see low circulation  
16 of reading materials; and

17 (g) Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is essential to  
18 mastering other academic subjects. Students who struggle with literacy  
19 are 4 times more likely to eventually drop out of school without earning  
20 their high school diploma.

21 (2) Therefore, the general assembly finds that it is imperative for  
22 children from birth to 5 years old have access to high-quality,  
23 age-appropriate books on a monthly basis at no cost to families.

24 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-90-120 as  
25 follows:

26 **24-90-120. Colorado imagination library program - creation**  
27 **- request for proposal - state librarian duties - report - definitions.**

1 (1) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT  
2 OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

3 (a) "COUNTY-BASED AFFILIATE PROGRAMS" MEANS A LOCAL  
4 AFFILIATE OF THE COLORADO IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROGRAM THAT  
5 OPERATES WITHIN A COUNTY OR CITY AND COUNTY.

6 (b) "ELIGIBLE CHILD" MEANS A CHILD FROM BIRTH TO THE CHILD'S  
7 FIFTH BIRTHDAY.

8 (c) "NATIONAL NONPROFIT FOUNDATION" MEANS A NATIONAL  
9 NONPROFIT FOUNDATION THAT EXISTS FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF  
10 WORKING WITH LOCAL ENTITIES TO IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AND  
11 MAIL AGE-APPROPRIATE, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS EACH MONTH TO THOSE  
12 CHILDREN AT NO COST TO FAMILIES.

13 (d) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE COLORADO IMAGINATION LIBRARY  
14 PROGRAM CREATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

15 (2) NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 31, 2020, THE STATE LIBRARIAN  
16 IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL CONTRACT WITH A COLORADO  
17 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION FOR THE CREATION AND OPERATION OF THE  
18 COLORADO IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROGRAM. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL:

19 (a) EXIST FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF CREATING AND OPERATING  
20 THE PROGRAM;

21 (b) MANAGE THE DAILY OPERATIONS OF THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING  
22 BUT NOT LIMITED TO ESTABLISHING COUNTY-BASED AFFILIATE PROGRAMS  
23 IN ALL COLORADO COUNTIES AND CITIES AND COUNTIES AND ADVANCING  
24 AND STRENGTHENING THE AFFILIATE PROGRAMS TO ENSURE ENROLLMENT  
25 GROWTH;

26 (c) DEVELOP, PROMOTE, AND COORDINATE A PUBLIC AWARENESS  
27 CAMPAIGN TO MAKE DONORS AWARE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO DONATE TO

1 THE AFFILIATE PROGRAM AND MAKE THE PUBLIC AWARE OF THE  
2 OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER ELIGIBLE CHILDREN TO RECEIVE BOOKS  
3 THROUGH THE PROGRAM; AND

4 (d) CONTRACT WITH A NATIONAL NONPROFIT FOUNDATION TO  
5 PROVIDE AGE-APPROPRIATE, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS EACH MONTH TO  
6 ELIGIBLE CHILDREN AT NO COST TO FAMILIES.

7 (3) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), ON OR  
8 BEFORE JULY 1, 2021, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER, THE CONTRACTOR  
9 SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WHICH  
10 SHALL THEN SUBMIT THE REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEES OF THE  
11 SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OR ANY SUCCESSOR  
12 COMMITTEES, CONCERNING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN  
13 RESIDING IN EACH COUNTY OR CITY AND COUNTY IN COLORADO AND HOW  
14 MANY ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ARE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM IN EACH  
15 COUNTY OR CITY AND COUNTY.

16 (4) (a) THE CONTRACTOR, IN OPERATING THE PROGRAM, SHALL  
17 PAY TO THE NATIONAL NONPROFIT FOUNDATION FIFTY PERCENT OF THE  
18 STATEWIDE COST TO PROVIDE BOOKS TO ELIGIBLE CHILDREN ENROLLED IN  
19 THE PROGRAM, AS DETERMINED BY THE NATIONAL NONPROFIT  
20 FOUNDATION. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL ANNUALLY APPROPRIATE  
21 MONEY FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
22 FOR THE STATE'S SHARE OF THE COST TO PROVIDE THE BOOKS, AND THE  
23 STATE LIBRARIAN SHALL DISTRIBUTE THE MONEY TO THE CONTRACTOR.

24 (b) EACH COUNTY-BASED AFFILIATE PROGRAM SHALL PAY TO THE  
25 CONTRACTOR THE REMAINDER OF THE COST, AS DETERMINED BY THE  
26 NATIONAL NONPROFIT FOUNDATION, TO PROVIDE BOOKS TO THE ELIGIBLE  
27 CHILDREN ENROLLED IN THE COUNTY OR CITY AND COUNTY.

1           **SECTION 3. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act  
2 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
3 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August  
4 5, 2020, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2020); except that, if a  
5 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the  
6 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act  
7 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect  
8 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
9 November 2020 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
10 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.