

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 5th, 2020

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chair Noble, Vice Chair Williams, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos David Garcia, and I am Director of Economic Opportunity at Neighborhood Partnerships. Neighborhood Partnerships is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to help create a better Oregon, one in which we all have access to opportunity, stability, and what we need to thrive. For us, this begins with financial well-being and a stable, affordable place to call home.

In my role at Neighborhood Partnerships, I have the privilege to lead a team that oversees the Oregon Individual Development Account Initiative (or IDAs) on behalf of the State. IDAs help build hope by creating stronger financial futures for Oregon individuals and families with low incomes. The IDA program does this by incentivizing savings, promoting strong financial habits, and helping savers reach their goal and build assets. It's this asset accumulation that provides our savers the security and space they need to look ahead, to plan for the future, and to reach their full potential.

Unfortunately, in Oregon and across our country there have been intentionally designed policies and practices that have kept people of color from building assets and wealth. The result is a racial wealth disparity that is growing by the day. We applaud the work done by the taskforce to address the disparities in homeownership, which is still the greatest single pathway for individuals and families to build wealth. We are excited to support all of the recommendations included in HB 4003, which will expand the tools and resources necessary to counteract these extreme disparities in homeownership.

Neighborhood Partnerships and our IDA Initiative partners stand ready and committed to working toward eliminating these racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership and other areas essential to helping individuals stabilize and thrive. As managers of the Oregon IDA Initiative, we are excited to see that the taskforce recognized the impact that IDAs can have in narrowing racial disparities and we are looking forward and are ready to deploy the additional resources to help achieve the Taskforce goals. Additionally, the provision to accelerate the maximum IDA match from \$3000 every twelve months to \$3,000 every six months for IDAs will be an essential change, giving homeowners a boost in our high cost housing market.

We also look forward to working with the Legislature to ensure the vitality of the Oregon IDA Initiative through a budget discussion to ensure IDAs are fully funded and available across our State.

Thank you for your service to Oregon. We urge you to support HB 4003.