

Submitter: Erica Maranowski

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On  
Transportation and Economic Development

Measure: SB5511

Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erica Maranowski, and I am a proud supporter of SB 5511, in favor of strong investments in Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).

I have lived in Portland, Oregon almost my entire life. During my childhood, my mother and I lived below the poverty line and experienced intermittent homelessness. Navigating these challenges was extremely difficult, and could have been avoided.

The stability I now have as an adult is, without a doubt, partly due to programs that stabilized circumstances for my mother and I years ago. However, that support was tenuous. If one more thing had gone wrong, or if our wait list had been just a little longer, things could have gone very badly for us.

If my mother and I had had earlier access to a program like the Oregon IDA Initiative, our lives would have been radically improved in countless ways. Better economic opportunities during that time would have made a huge difference.

Poverty is expensive for individuals, families, and governments. Like with medicine, a preventative approach is best and cheapest in the long-term, for all parties. Creating equitable economic opportunity statewide helps prevent poverty statewide by ensuring that more Oregonians can contribute their talents and skills to our communities, economies, and region. Equitable economic opportunity is essential to any healthy and functional society.

As an adult, I have spent significant time in a dozen countries, and have seen how much better economic opportunity can be. Government systems exist to expand opportunity in many other places, including in France, Singapore, and Germany. These programs contribute to robust and stable economies locally, regionally, and nationally. The US lags behind the world in economic opportunity policies and systems. We can do better – and we must. Please support SB 5511, and help Oregon lead on opportunity for individuals, families, communities, and our entire economy.

Thank you for your time,

Erica Maranowski, Portland Resident & SB 5511 Supporter