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On Behalf Of: rootedhomes
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1530

In May of 2023 I was able to purchase my home. My home purchase was supported by the IDA program.

I am a first generation homebuyer, and have no outside financial or generational knowledge support from parents and family. Growing up my family struggled with housing security, poverty, job loss, mental health issues, and disability. Due to this we moved often, and several times over the years had to move into a one bedroom apartment with another family often for years at a time. I never truly had a place to call my own. I dreamed of owning a home. I craved the stability, security, and predictability I could only imagine would come with having a home of my own. As time went on I felt homeownership was out of reach for me, especially after a loan officer laughed at me and told me there was no way I could purchase with my income. I walked away defeated, embarrassed, and with this experience as a confirmation that home ownership was not for people like me. I had begun telling people in my life it was a dream for others, but not me.

Through homeownership I have learned some hard lessons. Buying a home is more than purchasing a structure. Buying a home is navigating banking systems not traditionally not set up to serve people like me who have no experience. Buying a home requires understanding loans, credit, and debt. Buying a home is pushing yourself into a world of unknown terms and acronyms. Buying a home is grieving for those you love who were never given the same opportunities.

The IDA program changed my life. I live with less fear about my future. I am changing my family's story. I am changing my story. The IDA program did not give me a handout, but gave me a hand to hold onto as I took a terrifying leap. A hand that pulled me up a step to have a chance at making my dream a reality. I received education on the homebuying process, as well as saving money, planning for my future, and making smart financial choices. I met with a realtor who guided me through complicated paperwork. I also met another loan officer, one who rooted for me every step of the way. I received support from housing counselors and non-profit workers who answered my questions over and over, and helped calm my fears. There came a point in my journey that I knew if something happened, and I lost my spot, I had the tools to make my dream happen.

Unfortunately my story is not unique. There are many members of our communities looking for a hand to help them up. The IDA program is life changing. Please allow this program to continue to help first generation homebuyers like me, low income

members of our communities, and those who have lost their dream of owning a home.