

Submitter: Erin Meechan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3809

Re: Support For HB 3809 -1

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of myself and my family, to urge you to support HB 3809, with the -1 amendment. Please “Fix the Funding” for IDAs!

In 1999 the Legislature created Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). This matched-savings program provides participants with education and individualized support to reach their financial goals, including homeownership, home repair, higher education, purchasing a vehicle, starting a business, and retirement. The state matches participants’ own savings up to 5-to-1 to make their dreams a reality. Over 19,000 Oregonians have participated in this life-changing program over the past 25 years.

I personally am on the waiting list for the IDA programs coined the Goals program through Home Forward housing agency for Multnomah County. I am a section 8 housing choice voucher holder and being part of the Goals program would pop me out of this low-income bracket as my wages increase.

I have seen this program work for others with vouchers to purchase a home and even start a nonprofit that helps refugees get settled when they arrive here in Oregon. These families graduated and their voucher went back into the pool to be used by another family in need.

HB 3809 -1 is needed because the state tax credit that funds IDAs has not kept pace with inflation. While the program’s tax credit revenue has been stagnant since 2009, the cost of everything that IDA participants save for has increased significantly – especially the two most common savings goals of higher education and homeownership. Each saver needs more of the program’s limited funds in order to be successful. If the Legislature does not act this year, the IDA program will shrink by 50% and will enroll fewer than 500 people each year going forward.

By passing HB 3809 -1, the Legislature can “Fix the Funding” and return the IDA program to solid financial footing, ensuring that your constituents can continue reaching their goals. My family and I urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Erin Meechan