

Submitter: Randy Lucas  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Tax Expenditures  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB120  
Re: Support for Individual Development Accounts in SB 120 -1

Dear Co-Chair Nathanson, Co-Chair Meek, and Members of the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures:

Please raise the cap on the tax credit that funds Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to at least \$14M, through SB 120 -1.

The Legislature created Individual Development Accounts in 1999. 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 – spanning every House and Senate district in the state.

I have personally benefitted from the Oregon IDA program. The matching dollars motivated me to save toward my home purchase goal in 2017, and through the financial education, I was able to improve my credit significantly and turn my negative assets that dogged me for years into a net surplus that will lead to generational wealth for my family. The education component of the IDA program was key to my ability to invest in my future by increasing my income. This increase in income also helps the State of Oregon generate additional revenue to further support others.

The tax credit that funds IDAs has not kept pace with inflation. While the credit has been capped at \$7.5M per year since 2009, the cost of everything that IDA participants save for has increased dramatically. Each saver needs more funds from the program in order to be successful, yet tax credit revenue has remained stagnant, prompting the Legislature to provide supplemental investments from the general fund in each of the past three budget cycles. An updated \$14M tax credit cap will allow the IDA program to enroll 1,750 new participants each biennium going forward – close to the program's established service level of 2,000 new savers per biennium. (If the Legislature takes no action on IDA funding this year, the program will shrink much further, to enroll only 1,000 people per biennium.)

By raising the IDA tax credit cap to at least \$14M through SB 120, the Legislature can return the IDA program to solid financial footing. I urge you to include IDAs in this bill.

Sincerely,  
Randy Lucas  
former IDA saver