

Neighborhood Partnerships

Creating Opportunity for All Oregonians
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House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chair Morgan, Vice-Chair Campos, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos Garcia, and I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Partnerships. Neighborhood Partnerships is a state-wide organization that centers its work on building systemic, long-term change in order to maximize the impact on the lives of people with low incomes and people of color. We believe in an Oregon full of financially resilient households where opportunity and prosperity are shared widely and accessible to all. On behalf of Neibhorhood Partnerships I'm writing to share our organization's strong support of HB 2007.

HB 2007 seeks to address racial disparities in homeownership by expanding existing funding and technical assistance for the Home Ownership Assistance Account. It seeks to address potential biases within the real estate industry by requiring education in racial bias in addition to existing requirements to obtain or renew a mortgage orginator's license. HB 2007 seeks appropriations for several programs including the \$4 million Home Ownership Assistance Account and \$1 million for **Individual Development Accounts**, which is a critical tool for low-income Oregonians to save towards homeownership.

Individual Development Accounts, or IDAs offer a hope of a better future to Oregonians. IDAs are matched savings accounts that Oregonians with low incomes can open at a financial institution to save over several months or years towards a specified asset goal. After the account holder reaches their savings goal, which can span from a few hundred dollars, or a few thousand, they receive a match on their savings, which can be a 1-to-1 match, or up to 5-to-1 match depending on the provider and asset goal. IDAs are a critical tool for Oregonians with low incomes in attaining the dream of homeownership. More than 3,500 Oregonians are currently saving in IDAs, and more than 15,000 have opened an IDA since the program's creation in 1999. Collectively, IDA savers have saved more than \$28 million of their own money in order to pursue the various goals, particularly purchasing their own home.

Neighborhood Partnerships supports the mission and contents of HB 2007, however we respectfully request that policy changes around IDAs (Section 5) be removed from HB 2007 as there is another vehicle in this session, HB 2551, that aims to make the same policy changes with slightly different language. We have voiced these concerns about duplicating existing work with the chief sponsor of HB 2007, Representative Ruiz and we would support an amendment offered to strike language in Section 5 of this bill to avoid any confusion.

We urge your support of HB 2007. Thank you for your time and service to our state.

Sincerely,



Carlos David Garcia
Executive Director, Neighborhood Partnerships