



**Testimony in Support of Renewing the IDA Tax Credit (HB2011)
Before the
House Committee on High Education, Innovation & Workforce Development
March 6, 2015
Submitted by: Deborah Steinkopf**

Chair Read, Vice-Chairs Gallegos and Whisnant and members of the House Committee On Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development:

My name is Cassie Russell and I am the Economic Empowerment Coordinator at Bradley Angle. The oldest domestic violence shelter and provider of community-based services on the west coast, our mission is to provide services to all people affected by domestic violence. Our services help survivors build safety, stability, and provide meaningful access to resources. Bradley Angle's Economic Empowerment Program provides tools that help survivors achieve their financial, education, and career goals.

Please ensure our work in the community can continue by supporting the renewal and expansion of the Oregon Individual Development (IDA) Initiative by passing HB 2011 out of committee.

The Oregon Individual Development Account Initiative has brought more safety and family well-being for my community.

IDAs serve our most vulnerable of our neighbors. Vickie lived in Bradley Angle's Emergency Shelter after seeking safety for herself and her four small children. Vickie accessed resources to obtain safe, affordable housing. Once safe, Vickie felt ready to focus on her career and she enrolled in the IDA program. Vickie opened a savings account for the first time in her life, and began exploring career options. After taking an eight week financial education course, meeting regularly with an advocate to explore career options, and saving monthly Vickie recently made her first matched withdrawal to pay for a career training program.

With the help of her IDA she will have increased earning potential, and has contributed to our local community college system. But the IDA is bigger than just accessing school. Vickie now also has a small emergency savings account. For the first time in her life, needing new tires or registering kids for camp will now be within reach. More importantly for Vickie, her four children are learning the importance of saving and