



May 27, 2020

Dear Senator Story, Senator Coram and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Habitat for Humanity of Colorado is the state support organization serving the 25 affiliates building in 45 communities across the state. Habitat for Humanity has built, rehabbed and repaired over 3,000 homes partnering with families making between 30-80% of the area median income. These are hard working families employed as teachers, restaurant managers, working in retail, hospitality and in the construction industries.

Families like Denise and her two children. Denise always wanted to be a teacher, but things got derailed as she found herself divorced and alone with a one and a two-year-old to raise and suddenly that dream got moved to the back burner. Denise was living in an income-based rental but could barely make ends meet and she didn't feel safe letting her kids play outside. Her children went to daycare while she worked, and she would charge that expense to her credit card, and then work extra hours the rest of the year to pay it off.

A co-worker recommended that Denise apply for a Habitat for Humanity home. She was accepted into the program and when her home was finally complete, Denise couldn't have been more excited or proud. Her kids were thrilled to have their own rooms, to have a place to call their own, and most importantly to be able to play outside without fear or worry.

Everything had changed for the better, and with the newfound time and financial stability, Denise went back to school to get her Master's in Education and, after completing that, she accepted her dream job as a Kindergarten teacher. This fall marks her 17th year as a teacher. Denise stands firm that everything would have been different – her job, her house, her kids, if not for Habitat.

Senate Bill 208 reauthorizes a stable funding stream through the Colorado Tax Checkoff that enables Habitat for Humanity of Colorado to continue to bring people together to build homes, communities and hope. According to 2018 findings from The Colorado Health Foundation, Coloradans identified housing affordability as the number one important issue facing Colorado today. What I personally appreciate about the Tax Checkoff is that it provides an opportunity for our Colorado neighbors to be a part of the solution. **The average donation on the Tax Checkoff is \$11.71, and those donations have added up each year to \$100,000 to benefit the work of Habitat for Humanity of Colorado.** I ask you to support this legislation today which will help to continue to bring people together to be part of the affordable housing solution and help numerous important causes across our state.

Thank you,
Karen Kallenberg, Executive Director
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