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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION**

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 21, 2023

TO:           The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
              Senate Committee on Judiciary

              The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair  
              Senate Committee on Judiciary

              Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM:       Tony Baldomero, Associate Director for *TB*  
              Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director  
              Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT:    **Testimony on S.B. No. 627, Relating to Campaign Finance.**

Friday, February 24, 2023  
9:30 a.m., Conference Room 16 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission (“Commission”) supports the intent of this bill.

This bill amends Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §11-381 by adding a new paragraph to subsection (a) that allows a candidate to use campaign funds to pay for the cost of child care or vital household dependent care where the care is needed because of the candidate’s participation in campaign activity. Commission staff notes that the payment for care could also be considered as being directly related to the candidate’s campaign.



*Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.*

To: Senator Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Gabbard, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: SB627, relating to campaign finance  
9:30 a.m., Feb. 24, 2023

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 627, relating to campaign finance.**

In May 2021, the Vote Mama Foundation noted that by the time American women are 44 years old, most of them—86%—are mothers. Yet, only 6% of those in Congress at the time were mothers with school-aged children. Further, the Foundation noted in their October 2022 Politics of Parenthood report that **6.58% of Hawai'i's Legislature was comprised of mothers with minor children**, ranking 18<sup>th</sup> of all states.

**Hawai'i has shown promise with its representation of mothers of young children in office, but we can do better.** Running for office takes time outside of full-time work hours. This becomes an even greater challenge for parents of young children who cannot always come to campaign activities but whose care costs money. SB627 will make our campaign expenditures law clear that candidates may use their campaign funds for child and dependent care.

Parents who take on primary caregiving roles offer important insights into policymaking and the ways laws are executed in real life. They offer unique perspectives not just of what it's like as a caregiver but also as voices for our youngest residents who cannot vote. Our State Legislature will only be further enhanced by fuller participation by parents and caregivers alike.

**SB627 is one way in which we can reduce barriers for parents seeking to run for office. Please advance this measure.**

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz  
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

**SB-627**

Submitted on: 2/23/2023 3:22:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louisa Duggan	Testifying for Vote Mama Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Louisa Duggan - and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Vote Mama Foundation in strong support of SB627.

Childcare obligations are one of the major factors families consider when weighing their decision to run for office. In many states, it costs more to send an infant to childcare than a mortgage payment. This is not an expense working families can take on - especially when campaigning.

In 2018, the Federal Election Commission approved federal candidates' option to spend campaign funds on childcare through a unanimous, bipartisan vote.

However, this ruling does not apply to state and local candidates. Vote Mama Foundation is working to approve the use of Campaign Funds for Dependent Care by state and local candidates in all 50 states.

As of today, 28 states, both Democratic and Republican, have brought their state statutes in line with federal regulations. States like Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Montana, Vermont, and Washington all allow for candidates to use their campaign dollars on expanded caregiver expenses to include those for any dependent, just as this bill does.

This legislation is a bipartisan initiative for moms and dads alike. As with any other campaign finance allowance, this bill creates an option for use and is not a mandate - candidates don't have to use campaign funds on caregiving expenses if they don't want to.

Even better - this common sense solution is at no cost to taxpayers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to support SB627 and vote it out of committee.

**SB-627**

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 9:09:37 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB627.

**SB-627**

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 7:33:54 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

I write in support of SB 627, which allows candidates seeking election to use campaign funds for child care and vital household dependent care costs.

Many other states view child care costs as permitted campaign expenditures. [As noted by the Center for American Women and Politics](#) at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University:

*"Of the 26 states which currently allow or have allowed campaign funds for childcare as of February 2023, only 16 states have enshrined the practice into law. A 2018 Minnesota statute specifically lists campaign-related childcare as an allowable expense for campaign funds. California, Colorado, New Hampshire, New York, and Utah passed bills in 2019 allowing campaign funds to be used for campaign-related childcare expenses. New Jersey passed a bill in 2020, followed in 2021 by Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Montana, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. Washington passed a bill in 2022. As of October 2022, at least twelve other states have bills allowing the practice pending in their legislatures..."*

Hawai'i should join those states that recognize child care costs as a permissible campaign expenditure via statute.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.