



**STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION**


235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 18, 2025

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: Anthony Baldomero, Associate Director 
Campaign Spending Commission

SUBJECT: **Testimony on S.B. No. 1202, Relating to Campaign Finance.**

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

9:45 a.m., Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. The Campaign Spending Commission ("Commission") supports this bill.

This measure amends Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS") §11-381(a) by adding two new paragraphs that would allow a candidate to use campaign funds to pay for childcare and vital household dependent care costs that would not have been incurred but for the candidate's participation in the candidate's own campaign activity. Arguably, such use of campaign funds would already be permitted under §11-381(a)(1) as the costs appear to be directly related to the candidate's campaign. The Commission has issued advisory opinions concerning §11-381(a)(1) and the use of campaign funds for the purposes addressed by this measure. In Advisory Opinion No. 15-01, the Commission determined that §11-381(a)(1) permitted the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses necessitated by the candidate's participation in campaign activities. In Advisory Opinion 15-02, the Commission determined that §11-381(a)(1) permitted the use of campaign funds to pay for adult dependent care¹ expenses necessitated by the candidate's participation in campaign activities.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

¹ The definition of "adult dependent care" supplied by the requestor of the advisory opinion is essentially the same as the definition of "vital household dependent care" in this measure.



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

9:45 a. m.

State Capitol Conference Room 016 and via videoconference

Re: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports SB 1202, which allows campaign funds to be used for a candidate's childcare and vital household dependent care costs under certain conditions.

We have an obligation to dismantle barriers family caregivers face when they seek public office. SB 1202 helps to level the playing field for candidates who are family caregivers. Family caregivers should have the freedom to campaign to serve the residents of Hawaii. By ensuring that everyone can have a seat at the table, we can achieve policies and programs that reflect the needs of our State as a whole because we all take our lived experiences with us wherever we go.¹

We urge you to support SB 1202, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email gsimon@aarp.org

1. U. S. Representative Nikema Williams, *Women and Caregivers Face Too Many Barriers Running for Office—Here's How the 'Help America Run' Act Can Help*, Ms. Published April 4, 2024. <https://msmagazine.com/2024/04/04/women-politics-parent-mother-childcare-costs-run-for-office-congress/>. Accessed February 14, 2025.



COMMITTEE: Senate Committee on Judiciary
DATE: February 19, 2025
TIME: 9:45 am
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Room 016

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
And members of Senate Committee on Judiciary
RE: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Hawaii State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. The Women's Caucus **SUPPORTS SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance.**

The purpose of this bill is to allow campaign funds to be used for a candidate's child care or vital household dependent care costs when: 1) such costs would not have occurred but for the candidate's campaign; 2) costs are limited to the date the candidate files nomination papers to the day after the date of the primary or general election in which the candidate appears on the ballot; and 3) the services shall not be provided by immediate family members.

Women face many hurdles in the political arena. Women are 15 times more likely than men to be responsible for the majority of caregiving. If a mother wants to run for office, they are harshly judged for "not focusing on their family" or are disfavored for being "unavailable" to constituents. Instead of seizing opportunities in the prime of their professional lives, mothers who would be candidates are inclined to wait until their children are grown before running for office. By then, they are set-back and unable to achieve leadership roles at the same rate as men. The sooner mothers run for office, the sooner their seniority will count. Furthermore, this is a gender-neutral, non-partisan proposal that will profoundly lighten the burden not only felt by women, but by all caregivers, minorities, and those with low-middle income, which in turn, will increase their representation in elected office.

This proposal will be in line with at least 28 other states who have enacted similar legislation. Hawai'i, the state which sent Patsy T. Mink (the mother of Title IX) to D.C. should be among the first to pass such legislation. Sadly, it is poised to be one of the last.

In July and August 2024, the Campaign Spending Commission provided advisory opinions (25-01 and 25-02) to support the use of campaign funds for child care and adult dependent care and allow individuals who are caregivers to run for office. The Commission also recommended that language to allow this expenditure be added to statute (HRS Chapter 11-381). SB 1202 will implement their recommendation.

Child and dependent care expenses are putting the squeeze on all of Hawaii's working families in an increasingly stratified economy. The more lawmakers we have who are caregivers, the better our laws will be at easing the burdens felt by all.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance.**

Members of Hawaii State Democratic Women's Caucus

SB-1202

Submitted on: 2/14/2025 10:15:55 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Would not candidates already having minor children or dependents already have handled their supervision arrangements/costs prior to candidacy?

Perhaps cover only expenses in excess of the candidates usual, customary expenses for child or dependent care.

Thank you

Mrs Ruth Love

SB-1202

Submitted on: 2/15/2025 8:38:51 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this measure.

Campaign funds should not be used for personal expenses.

If you run for a position, pay your own personal expenses like everyone else.

SB-1202

Submitted on: 2/15/2025 7:09:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/19/2025 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Nash	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support campaign funds to be used for a candidate's child & elder care costs.

February 19, 2025

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Judiciary

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta

RE: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

POSITION: Strong Support

I write in strong support of SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance which allows campaign funds to be used for a candidate's child care and vital household dependent care costs under certain conditions.

Hawaii's Campaign Spending Commission issued Advisory Opinions 25-01 and 25-02 allowing the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses and adult dependent care expenses necessitated by a candidates' participation in campaign activities.

In 2018, the Federal Election Commission approved federal candidates' option to spend campaign funds on childcare and in 2024 expanded the allowance to broader dependent care expenses.

SB 1202 not only codifies the Advisory Opinions issued by the Campaign Spending Commission but also allows candidates running for state and local offices the option of using their campaign funds as allowed for those running for federal office.

I believe that the perspectives of families with young families and families who have dependent care responsibilities are valuable in policy making and elective offices. The cost of care should not be an impediment to their seeking public office.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in strong support of SB 1202. I ask the committee to pass this bill.

