



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

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 11, 2025

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Kristin Izumi-Nitao, Executive Director  
Campaign Spending Commission

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

Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325 & 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 care<sup>1</sup> expenses necessitated by the candidate's participation in campaign activities.

The Commission requests that this committee pass this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
2:00 p. m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 325 and via videoconference

Re: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

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.<sup>1</sup>

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](mailto: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 March 10, 2025.



To: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB1202

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB1202 which would allow an election candidate, treasurer, or candidate committee to use campaign funds for the candidate's child care and vital household dependent care costs.

Majority of Americans believe women are as capable of being good political leaders as men and there are many benefits of political leadership by women. While we celebrate Hawai'i's first woman speaker of House, only 36.8% of Hawai'i state legislators are women<sup>1</sup>, only 11.84% are moms with kids under 18<sup>2</sup>. Why? Moms spend twice more time than dads providing childcare, and daughters are more likely to be the primary caregiver than sons. The cost of childcare and kupuna care in Hawai'i is too high for most candidates to pay out of their own pocket.

In 2018, the Federal Election Commission approved federal candidates' option to spend campaign funds on childcare. Thirty nine states and Washington DC have since brought their state statutes in line with federal regulations<sup>3</sup>. This measure would benefit all candidates, not just women candidates.

Women make up half of the population and almost half of the workforce. Please pass SB1202 which would contribute toward women making up half of the political leadership. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Younghee Overly  
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawai'i  
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/levels-office/state-legislature/women-state-legislatures-2024>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.votemamafoundation.org/popstateleg>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.votemamafoundation.org/cfcstates>

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawai'i is an all-volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward O'ahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women and their families.*



COMMITTEE: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
DATE: March 12, 2025  
TIME: 2:00 pm  
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Room 325

TO: Rep. David Tarnas, Chair  
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
And members of House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

RE: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, the Hawai'i 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: 3/11/2025 12:37:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 11, 2025

Aloha Chair David A. Tarnas, Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe, and Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1202, Relating to Campaign Finance.

My name is Caroline Kunitake and I am the current Vice Chair for the Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women (HCCSW). I am providing testimony on behalf of the HCCSW in support of SB 1202.

The mission of the HCCSW is to (1) address issues and concerns of women in the City and County of Honolulu and advise, make recommendations and follow-up evaluations to the Mayor and City Council; (2) advance the status of women through education, awareness, development and training; (3) and acknowledge, nurture and learn from the diverse culture Honolulu's women have to offer.

SB 1202 would allow campaign funds to be used for a candidate's child care and vital household dependent care costs under certain conditions. If passed, this legislation could remove financial barriers for women entering politics. Women often become the default child care and dependent care providers within their household. Without additional resources, child care and dependent care become a serious barrier to running for political office. SB 1202 could reduce and eliminate this barrier. HCCSW wants more women to run for political office to address the issues and concerns of women in Hawaii.

Half of the population in Hawaii are women. According to a recent United States Census Bureau Population Estimates Program and American Community Survey, women make up 49.8% of Hawaii's population. As of 2024, Hawaii's population has been estimated at 1,446,146 people which means there's approximately 720,180 women in Hawaii. Currently our state legislature has 40.8 percent women. Out of the total seventy-six legislative seats, thirty-one women are in office. Eight of the twenty-five Senate seats are held by women. Twenty-three of the fifty-one

House seats are held by women. Passing SB 1202 may promote gender parity at the state legislature.

The HCCSW urges you to pass SB 1202 this legislative session. HCCSW supports removing child care and dependent care barriers for women and others to run for political office. The HCCSW thanks you for hearing this bill and taking the time to review written testimony.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

Honolulu County Committee on the Status of Women Vice Chair



**SB-1202**

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 12:51:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Camron Hurt	Common Cause Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We at Common Cause Hawaii are in strong support of SB1202. We would always like to promote an election system that allows for a diverse set of candidates to be competitive in the political arena. Individuals with Children should have the opportunity to run and to have their campaign incur that expense. This is something that would be up to the discretion of the candidate, this is simply allowing them the chance to use campaign funds for childcare. This is an issue that could affect single moms and dads alike so we urge this body to see this measure move forward.

Yours in Service

Camron Hurt

**SB-1202**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:30:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1202. Please pass this bill.

March 12, 2025

To: Representative David Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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 individuals with young families and families who have dependent care responsibilities are valuable for 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.

**SB-1202**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:57:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bevin Parker-Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Regarding JHA Hearing on March 12, 2025 for SB1202-Relating to Campaign Finance**

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the JHA Committee:

My name is Bevin Parker-Evans and I am a resident of Kaua'i and a member of the SCC of the Democratic Party as representative for the Democratic Women's Caucus. I am writing today in strong support of SB1202 relating to childcare payments in campaign financing. Our women's caucus has been in strong support of this bill for many years as we are aware that, in particular, many women may not be able to run for office or campaign for state office if they are parents of young children and/or if they are single parents or have low or moderate incomes, simply because they can not afford to pay for childcare and/or dependent care unless they are able to use some of their campaign funds for these expenses.

This bill is well supported by the Campaign Spending Commission as they provided advisory opinions in July and August of 2024 (25-01 and 25-02) specifically to support the ability for candidates to use their campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses and to also support caregivers who wish to be candidates to run for office. The Commission also recommended that language to allow this type of expenditure be added to statute (see HRS Chapter 11-361). SB1202 will implement their recommendation.

Child and dependent care expenses are putting lots of pressure on all of Hawaii's working families. Parents of all genders are facing these difficulties. As the cost of living increases vehemently in Hawai'i, pressure will only increase on lawmakers who are also caregivers and parents. This type of expense pressure on all of our citizens means that without the assistance of being able to use their campaign funds for dependent care, less persons of moderate or low income will feel empowered to ever run for office.

This bill will allow our legislators to be more capable to run for office and provide the means to use their campaign funds for this particular dependent cost in order to empower more low and moderate income persons to actually run for office.

I ask that your JHA Commission please stand with me to support this bill for the benefit of all future and current legislators. This bill will help to increase the diversity of persons who are eligible to run for office and this diversity will be a blessing to our Hawai'i government.

Thank you for supporting SB1202, especially since you have the support of the Campaign Spending Commission already. This is a great bill for our future.

Respectfully submitted,

Bevin Parker-Evans, Kaua'i Resident, 3721 Omao Road, Koloa, HI 96756