



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:34 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 225 and via videoconference

Re: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

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 child care 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 January 29, 2025.

January 30, 2025

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Senate



Re: Public Comment

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Louisa Duggan, and I am the Policy Director at Vote Mama Foundation. I am submitting this letter on behalf of the organization in strong support of [SB1202](#) introduced by Senator Kim.

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 cover an infant's childcare than to make a mortgage payment. This is not an expense working families can take on — especially when campaigning for public office.

Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization working to expand and codify the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC) in all 50 states. Having young children should never deter any parent from considering a run for office. By making this one simple change, we can support young families and their need for safe and affordable care while on the campaign trail.

In 2018, the Federal Election Commission approved federal candidates' option to spend campaign funds on childcare through a unanimous, bipartisan vote. This paved the way for other federal candidates to do the same.

Since the 2018 ruling, Vote Mama Foundation has found a monumental increase in CFCC—the **usage of campaign funds spent on childcare expenses has increased by 662% at the federal level.** Over 68 federal candidates—both moms and dads, Democrats and Republicans—have used their campaign funds for childcare in 90 races. The increased usage of Campaign Funds for Childcare expenses since the 2018 FEC ruling shows how important this resource is for working parents. However, this ruling does not apply to candidates running for state and local office.

As of today, 39 states and the District of Columbia have brought their state statutes in line with federal regulations. States like California, New York, Vermont, and Washington all allow for candidates to use their campaign dollars on childcare expenses.

Our research underscores that when candidates can use campaign funds on childcare expenses - they will. Since 2018, CFCC usage has increased by 2,156% at the state & local level. The increase is particularly salient among historically underrepresented people who face additional barriers when running for and serving in office. A majority of the funds spent by women candidates at both the federal and state levels on caregiving services were spent by women of color. **At the state and local level, 70% of funds were spent by candidates of color.**

CFCC has been utilized by 87+ state & local candidates in 13+ states. At least \$297,582 was spent on caregiving expenses from 2018 - 2022 by candidates nationwide. Over \$1 million has been spent on CFCC at the state and federal levels since 2018. We know this vital resource

matters in who can run for office, up and down the ballot, across the country, *regardless of political ideology*.



In 2024, the Federal Election Commission expanded this allowance to broader dependent care expenses - allowing federal candidates the ability to use campaign funds on dependent care expenses directly related to campaign activities.

Currently state and local candidates in Hawai'i are allowed to use their campaign funds on dependent care expenses through an Advisory Opinion published in 2024 by the State of Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission. By codifying the Advisory Opinion, the Hawai'i State Senate has the opportunity to send a clear message to all candidates - that the use of campaign money on dependent care expenses is explicitly allowed and should be normalized.

Campaign Funds for Childcare is a bipartisan initiative for moms and dads alike. Even better, this common sense solution poses no cost to taxpayers or state governments.

I urge the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services to support SB1202 and vote the bill out of committee. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Louisa M. Duggan'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Louisa Duggan
Policy Director, Vote Mama Foundation



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB1202

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, 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 women¹, only 11.84% are moms with kids under 18². 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 regulations³. 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

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

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

³ <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.

SB-1202

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:00:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Shimizu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

I support SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance.

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Debbie Shimizu