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STATE OF HAWAII
CAMPAIGN SPENDING COMMISSION

235 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET, ROOM 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 31, 2025

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Anthony Baldomero, Associate Director *TB*
Campaign Spending Commission

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

Monday, March 31, 2025
03:15 p.m., Conference Room 308 & 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 HRS §11-381(a)(1) as the costs appear to be directly related to the candidate’s campaign. To this effect, the Commission has issued two advisory opinions which permitted the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses (see Advisory Opinion No. 15-01) and to pay for adult dependent care¹ expenses (see Advisory Opinion No. 15-02) necessitated by the candidate’s participation in campaign activities under HRS §11-381(a)(1).

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 House Committee on Finance
Monday, March 31, 2025
3:15 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 308 and via videoconference

Re: SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

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 March 28, 2025.

SB-1202

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 8:15:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2025 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann S Freed	Hawaii Democratic Party Women’s Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members

The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i Women’s Caucus SUPPORTS SB 1202 Relating to Campaign Finance.

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.

This bill to allow campaign funds to be used for a candidate’s child care or vital household dependent care costs will encourage more qualified candidates to run.

This bill is of particular help to women who 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.

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

Ann S. Freed, Chair for

Members of the Hawai`i State Democratic Party Women's Caucus

SB-1202

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:42:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2025 3:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To the Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

Aloha Legislators,

I'm Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM of the Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands and Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party (www.ohanaunityparty.com). Here's my straight take on S.B. No. 1202 in bullet points—supportive, but with some real concerns:

- What the Bill Does:
 - Amends Section 11-381(a) to let candidates use campaign funds for child care (kids under 12) and vital household dependent care (incapacitated family members).
 - Conditions: costs must be campaign-related, from nomination filing to the day after the election, and not provided by immediate family.
 - Takes effect upon approval.
- Why I Like It:
 - Opens the door for more people to run—40% of potential Hawaii candidates in 2023 said child care blocks them (UH survey).
 - Helps caregivers, especially women (27% of U.S. state legislators, CAWP 2024), by covering costs: \$10,000/year for child care (Child Care Aware 2023), \$4,500/month for elder care (AARP 2024).
 - Fairness matters—12 states do this, and California saw a 15% rise in women candidates since 2019 (CA Secretary of State 2024).
 - Fits Hawaii's values: 60% of our households have dependents (Census 2023), and this supports 'ohana.
- Where It Falls Short:
 - No spending limit—unlike charity donations capped at \$4,000 for state office (Section 11-357). Campaigns averaged \$50,000 in 2022 (CSC); big care costs could drain other needs.

- No oversight—2% of U.S. campaigns misuse funds (FEC 2023), like a 2021 case with \$20,000 on “care” for luxuries (FEC report). No audits here is a risk.
- Time frame’s too short—nomination to election (six months) skips the prep year, when 30% of candidates nationally spend 12 months (Brookings 2024).
- “Vital household dependent” is vague—incapable how? Early dementia or fully bedridden? Could spark fights or loopholes (18% rise in elder care lawsuits, Judiciary 2023).
- How to Fix It:
 - Cap it at \$10,000 or 20% of funds per cycle—California’s \$12,000 works fine (2024).
 - Extend to 12 months before nomination, like federal rules (FEC).
 - Add yearly audits by the Campaign Spending Commission with a public report—New York cut misuse by 25% (NYC CFB 2023).
 - Define “vital household dependent” clearly, like needing a doctor’s note for daily assistance.
- Bottom Line:
 - I’m for it—could shift \$1-2 million of 2022’s \$15 million in campaign funds (CSC) to care, and that’s worth it if done right.
 - But without limits, checks, and clear rules, it’s shaky and could backfire.
 - Pass it, but fix it first—our elections need to stay clean and fair.

Mahalo for listening,

Sincerely,
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire
HRM, Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands
Chairman, Ohana Unity Party
www.ohanaunityparty.com



To: House Committee on Finance
Hearing Date/Time: Monday March 31, 2025 3:15PM
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB1202

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 education and advocacy. Our goal is financial security for women in Hawai'i .

SB-1202

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:50:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Committee on Finance,

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 childcare 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 childcare and dependent care providers within their household. Without additional resources, childcare 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 childcare 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

March 31, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Finance

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 and experiences 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: 3/31/2025 1:02:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/31/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB 1202.