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HAWAI'I BECOMES THE 33rd STATE TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS FOR CHILDCARE

An advisory opinion from the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission officially authorizes the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare in Hawai'i, bringing the state in line with federal guidelines and 32 other states (plus Washington, D.C.) that have approved the measure.

Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization tracking the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare and working to authorize the measure in all 50 states.

NEW YORK — Yesterday, the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission issued a [formal rule change](#) clarifying that childcare expenses incurred while running for office are considered permissible campaign expenditures. This decision removes a significant financial barrier and makes it easier for everyday parents and caregivers to run for office. With this move, Hawai'i has become the latest state to allow the use of [Campaign Funds for Childcare](#), bringing the Aloha State in line with federal guidelines and [32 other states](#) (plus Washington, D.C.) that have approved the measure.

It is no secret that the cost of childcare is a barrier that holds millions of parents back. It is also a hurdle that severely impacts the representation of parents and caregivers, especially mothers, in elected office. In fact, according to 2022 data from Vote Mama Foundation, [less than 7 percent](#) of Hawai'i state legislators were mothers with minor children. This decision from the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission removes a significant barrier that has historically kept parents and caregivers out of the political arena and comes at no expense to taxpayers or the state. By authorizing the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses directly related to campaign duties, Hawai'i will empower more parents and caregivers to run for office and bring more advocates for American children and families to the decision-making table.

"I am incredibly proud to see the state where I grew up take such a tremendous step in the right direction for leveling the playing field for everyday parents and caregivers. The cost of childcare should never preclude anyone from stepping up to run for office," **said Louisa Duggan, Policy**

and Advocacy Manager at Vote Mama Foundation. “With this ruling today, Hawai’i is beginning a new chapter toward a more representative government and ensuring more champions of family-friendly policies have the chance to take a seat at the decision-making table.”

“I requested the advisory opinion because a bill died in the legislature and I didn’t want to go through another election cycle with the uncertainty of whether candidates could use Campaign Funds for Childcare,” **said Jeanne Ohta, requestor of the advisory opinion.** “I believe we need to encourage and enable candidates with young families to run for elected office. Their perspective is valuable to policy making and I hope this change will reduce a barrier for them to run for office.”

Background:

In 2018, Liuba Grechen Shirley (Vote Mama Foundation Founder and CEO) ran for Congress and petitioned the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and became the first woman in history to receive federal approval to spend Campaign Funds for Childcare (CFCC). This unanimous, bipartisan decision paved the way for more parents to run for office — 68 federal candidates have since used CFCC, both moms and dads, Democrats and Republicans. The FEC ruling made it easier for parents to run at the federal level, but it does not apply to candidates campaigning for state and local office. Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization working to authorize the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare in all 50 states. To date, 33 states (plus Washington, D.C.) have approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare.

According to a [recent Vote Mama Foundation report](#), spending on Campaign Funds for Childcare has increased by 662% for federal candidates and by 2,156% for state and local candidates since 2018.

Vote Mama Foundation is the leading source of research and analysis on the political participation of mothers in the United States. It works towards gender equity by normalizing mothers of minor children running for and serving in office, naming and dismantling the barriers that keep moms out of office and out of power, and enabling legislators to pass family-friendly policies. Vote Mama Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

To learn more about Vote Mama Foundation and Campaign Funds for Childcare, visit votemamafoundation.org

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