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INDIANA BECOMES THE 31st STATE TO AUTHORIZE THE USE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS FOR CHILDCARE

An advisory opinion from the Indiana Election Commission officially authorizes the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare in Indiana, bringing the state in line with federal guidelines and 30 other states 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 — Earlier this month, Indiana State Rep. Victoria Garcia Wilburn and Indiana State Sen. Andrea Hunley partnered with Vote Mama Foundation to [request an advisory opinion](#) from the Indiana Election Commission to remove a significant financial barrier and make it easier for everyday parents and caregivers to run for office. On Tuesday, the Indiana Election Commission issued an [advisory opinion](#) clarifying that childcare expenses incurred while running for office or holding public office are considered permissible campaign expenditures. With this decision, Indiana has become the latest state to allow the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare, bringing Indiana in line with federal guidelines and [30 other states](#) 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 office. In fact, according to 2022 data from Vote Mama Foundation [less than 1 percent](#) of Indiana state legislators were mothers with minor children. This decision from the Indiana Election 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 to the state. By authorizing the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare expenses directly related to campaign and official duties, Indiana will empower more caregivers to run for office and bring more advocates for American children and families to the decision-making table.

“Caregiving responsibilities should never be the reason someone cannot run for office or serve their community. Unfortunately, for many candidates the ability to run for office hinges on access

to childcare, and the cost can keep them out of the political arena entirely. To get more parents and caregivers into every level of office, we must remove the structural barriers that prevent them from running in the first place,” **said Liuba Grechen Shirley, Founder and CEO of Vote Mama Foundation.** “I launched Vote Mama Foundation because I envisioned a future in which no political candidate would have to consider the cost of care when weighing their decision to run for office. With this ruling from the Indiana Election Commission, we are now one step closer to making that vision a reality.”

“This advisory opinion is a win for all Hoosiers,” **said Rep. Victoria Garcia Wilburn (D-Fishers).** “More people being able to run for office and serve their communities means better government. My hope is that this decision tells parents: ‘You belong in government. You belong in elected office.’ I want to extend a big thanks to the Indiana Election Commission for this decision and commend Vote Mama Foundation and Sen. Hunley for their partnership on this critical issue.”

“I am grateful to the Election Commission for their prompt issuing of this significant advisory opinion,” **said Senator Andrea Hunley (D - Indianapolis).** “Childcare expenses present a barrier to access for families. Making it clear that these expenses are a necessary part of any campaign in which a parent is involved opens the door for Hoosiers who want to be more involved in their communities, but who may otherwise have struggled to afford time away from providing care to their children. Thank you to the Commissioners, to the Vote Mama Foundation, and to Representative Garcia Wilburn for your partnership in securing this empowering victory.”

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, 31 states 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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