

Campaign Funds for Childcare



Breaking Barriers for
Moms to Run for Office

MAY 2021



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Imagine if not one potential candidate at any level of our government had to consider the cost of childcare in weighing their decision to run for office.

Liz Hilde Shibley

**FOUNDER AND CEO, VOTE MAMA FOUNDATION
2018 CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE**

Message from the Founder and CEO

Becoming a parent is a life-changing event. For many parents, it's the first time they personally understand how deeply American policies fail working families. It's hard to fully grasp the economic impact of simply having a child. It's become a luxury few can easily afford.

Whenever I would mention universal childcare or paid family leave during my congressional campaign, someone would always tell me to ignore the women's issues, and stick to the bread and butter issues. We lose \$57 billion a year because of the lack of childcare.¹ Families lose \$20.6 billion in wages because of the lack of paid family leave.² **These are the bread and butter issues.** Women's issues are economic issues, and economic issues are family issues.

Sociology Professor Jessica Calarco recently said, "Other countries have social safety nets. The U.S. has women."³ The World Economic Forum ranks the United States 86th globally in women's political empowerment.⁴ The first and second places go to Iceland and Norway, countries that offer paid maternity and paternity leave, affordable quality government subsidized childcare, and flexible work schedules that make it possible for women to balance their responsibilities both as mothers and professionals.⁵ Representation matters.

More than five million American women have been pushed out of the labor force since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ In December 2020 alone, women lost 156,000 jobs

while men gained 16,000.⁷ Congress bailed out the airline industry last year but not the childcare industry, and there has been no national strategy for managing our education system, while keeping our children and teachers safe.⁸ As parents attempt to juggle work commitments with virtual school and the lack of childcare, it has been the women who have been most affected.

Why? The answer is clear: We do not have enough moms with young children in public office. We do not have enough working parents in office. More than half of our Congress members are millionaires who do not understand how most Americans live our lives.⁹ Most have not lived paycheck to paycheck. Most

do not have student loan debt.¹⁰ Most do not understand what it's like to be unable to afford childcare.

Running for office as a mother, especially a mother of young children, is extraordinarily difficult. Moms face cultural pressure with questions such as, "Who will watch your children while you're campaigning?" Moms are confronted with logistical hurdles, like the fact that women are 15 times more likely than men to be responsible for the majority of childcare. Moms also have to overcome structural barriers, such as the inability to afford childcare while campaigning full-time without a salary. These barriers force many women to wait until their children are grown before they even consider stepping up to run.

When I ran for Congress in 2018, my children were one and three-years old. I would make calls to donors, while nursing Nicholas, while Mila covered my head in hair clips. My mother was able to watch my babies every day after 3:30 p.m., which allowed me to head out the door, meet constituents, and attend community meetings. For months, I built forts, changed diapers, and made lunch with my phone attached to my ear. This schedule was unsustainable—but so was paying for childcare after giving up my salary to run. I no longer wondered why more mothers with young children weren't running for Congress.

I petitioned the Federal Election Commission, and became the first woman to receive federal approval to spend campaign funds on childcare. Fifty-one federal candidates have since used their campaign funds to pay for childcare—both moms and dads. However, the ruling on my request does not apply to candidates running for state and local office.

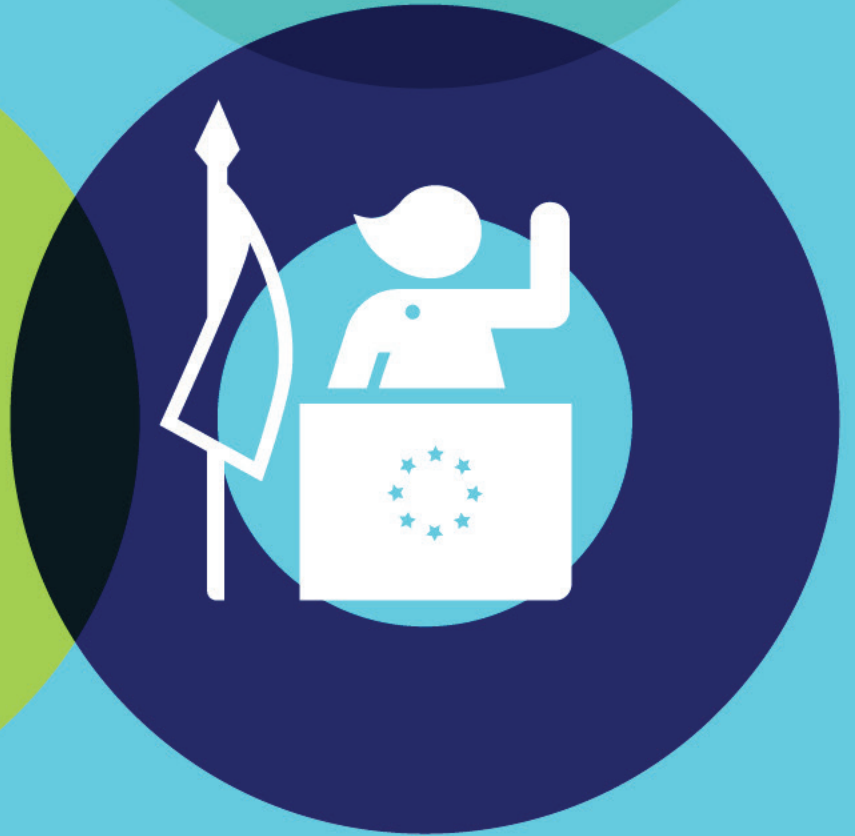
After my campaign, I launched the Vote Mama Foundation to help break down the barriers mothers face while running for office and legislators face while fighting for family-friendly legislation. Vote Mama has been working to ensure that every state and local candidate is able to use their Campaign Funds for Childcare. Imagine if not one potential candidate at any level of our government had to consider the cost of childcare in weighing their decision to run for office. Imagine if we could break down the door to empower a diverse pipeline of working mothers to run for office and win. By making this one simple structural change, we have the opportunity to transform the political landscape.

Sincerely yours,



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Vote Mama Foundation is the only nonprofit in the country working toward gender equity by breaking down the structural and cultural barriers mothers face while running for office. We understand that without childcare, running for office while caring for young children is close to impossible. This report shares the history of the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare informed by interviews conducted with current and former candidates and legislators, and it presents first-of-its-kind research on how working parents are using this to run strong campaigns across the country. **Our results demonstrate that the ability to use Campaign Funds for Childcare is vital for accessibility and equity.**



Representation Matters.

CANDACE VALENZUELA,
CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE

By the time American women are 44 years old, 86% are mothers.¹¹ Yet just 6% of people in the 117th Congress are mothers with school-aged children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problems working parents in America face. We are the only country in the world, other than Papua New Guinea, without paid family leave, and 1 in 4 new mothers goes back to work just 10 days after giving birth.¹² The United States is ranked 27th worldwide in public education and healthcare,¹³ and our representatives voted to take maternity coverage away from millions of American women when we have the worst maternal mortality rate in the industrialized world.^{14,15}

Throughout the pandemic, moms in Congress with children at home have been vocal about how families have been affected. Rep. Grace Meng urged Congress to fund childcare benefits for our healthcare workforce.¹⁶ Rep. Katherine Clark tweeted, "COVID-19 is highlighting the unfortunate consequences of long time underinvestment in childcare. Immediate action must be taken to address these gaps for childcare providers, educators, families—right now—but also critically important for our long term recovery."¹⁷





VOTE MAMA CEO LIUBA GRECHEN SHIRLEY

When Liuba Grechen Shirley petitioned the FEC for approval to use some of the funds she was raising for her campaign on childcare, she was warned that the request was “political suicide.”

When legislators personally experience an issue, they are more likely to address it. A 2019 study by Lisa Bryant and Julia Marin Hellwege found that moms with children 18 or younger serving in Congress introduce more bills over the course of their term than other Congresswomen do, and their legislation is often focused on children’s healthcare, paid family leave, childcare, reproductive rights, education, and affordable housing for families.¹⁸ Our Congress, State Houses, and country would look dramatically different if we had more moms serving in elected office.

However, many mothers do not have the resources to run for office. In many states,

single parents spend nearly 40% of their pre-tax income on childcare, and it costs more to send an infant to childcare than a teenager to a four-year public college.¹⁹ In 2002, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) issued a ruling to allow non-incumbent candidates running for federal office to pay themselves a salary out of their campaign funds;²⁰ however, very few candidates do so for fear of political attacks. Candidates who are not independently wealthy have been known to mortgage their homes, max out their credit cards, and take on debt to run for office. Campaign funds for childcare makes it easier for these candidates to throw their hat in the ring.

Breaking Down Barriers.

“Having young children shouldn’t disqualify me, or any parent, from running for office, and neither should not being able to afford childcare without an income. Besides, mothers with young children are made for the chaos of Washington. We are multitasking experts: We can nurse, change a diaper, broker sibling peace and balance a budget—all within an afternoon. It’s time to take down the institutional barriers blocking mothers from running for office. And if I’m going to win, then I need a babysitter.”²¹

**Liuba Grechen Shirley, Vote Mama Foundation
Founder and CEO and former Congressional Candidate**



VIRGINIA STATE SENATOR, AND 2021 CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, JENNIFER McCLELLAN

When Liuba Grechen Shirley petitioned the FEC for approval to use some of the funds she was raising for her campaign on childcare,²² she was warned that the request was “political suicide.” She did not have a choice though. Running for Congress is a full-time job without pay. While Grechen Shirley was the first woman to submit a request to use Campaign Funds for Childcare, she was not the first candidate. In 1995, Republican Representative Jim McCrery from Louisiana asked the FEC if he could spend Campaign Funds for Childcare when his wife, who was his infant son’s primary caregiver, joined him at campaign events.²³ The request was approved.²⁴ Another male candidate made a similar request in 2008, but the FEC did not have a quorum to issue a formal opinion.²⁵



SECRETARY HILLARY CLINTON, LIUBA GRECHEN SHIRLEY AND FAMILY



Young women like Ms. Grechen Shirley are now running for office in record-breaking numbers. For young mothers like her, the ability to seek office hinges on access to childcare.

SECRETARY HILLARY CLINTON
in support of Grechen Shirley's Federal Election Commission request²⁶

Grechen Shirley's request gained support from Secretary Hillary Clinton, 24 members of Congress,²⁷ two advocacy groups, and a law professor,²⁸ and she became the first woman in history to receive federal approval to spend campaign funds on childcare.²⁹ This was the first time the FEC issued an opinion allowing a campaign to pay for childcare expenses on an ongoing basis. It was a unanimous, bipartisan

decision, and Fox News said it was "the one bipartisan thing they could agree with."³⁰

"Women and working parents face many barriers in running for public office, including meeting childcare obligations during campaigns that require frequent travel and evening and weekend events," the members of Congress wrote.³¹ "As we work to build a political environment that is fair to candidates

of all backgrounds, the commission has a role to play in fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.”³² This groundbreaking decision removed a major financial obstacle for working families and mothers at a time when women are increasingly considering elected office. What’s more, as privately raised funds, it has no impact on public budgets.

After Grechen Shirley’s ruling in 2018, 23 federal candidates used their Campaign Funds for Childcare that same cycle. In 2019, Texas Senatorial candidate M.J. Hegar submitted an additional inquiry to the FEC,³³ which

further clarified that candidates who had full-time childcare prior to launching their campaign could use their Campaign Funds for Childcare.³⁴

Vote Mama Foundation is working to expand the FEC ruling to all 50 states by 2023. We are helping state candidates petition their state and local election commissions and working with legislators to introduce and pass legislation to approve the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare for state and local candidates.



JENNIFER CARROLL FOY, FORMER MEMBER OF THE VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES, AND 2021 CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA



Most Americans my age are working parents...but there are few of us with a seat at the table when it comes to writing legislation to make life easier for working families.

Rep. Katie Porter

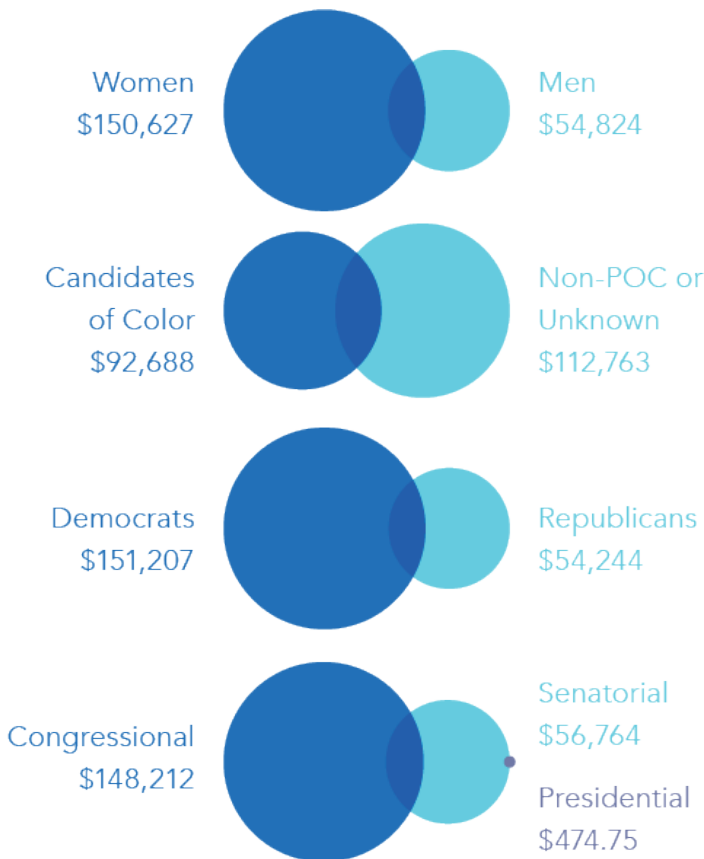
REPRESENTATIVE KATIE PORTER, CA-45



Campaign Funds for Childcare: Major Findings at the Federal Level

Since the FEC's landmark decision in 2018, 51 federal candidates—moms and dads, Democrats and Republicans, and congressional, senatorial, and presidential candidates—have used their campaign funds to pay for childcare.

TOTAL FUNDS SPENT FOR CHILDCARE: \$205,451



FEDERAL SPENDING ANALYSIS

73%

Spent by Women

In both 2018 and 2020, more than 73% of funds have been spent by women. By contrast, women made up just 29% of all U.S. House candidates and 24% of U.S. Senate candidates in 2020.³⁵

45%

Spent by People of Color

In both 2018 and 2020, more than 45% of funds were spent by people of color.

311%

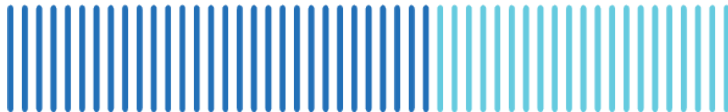
Increase in Spending

In 2018, 23 federal candidates spent \$40,000 of Campaign Funds for Childcare. In 2020, 33 federal candidates spent over \$165,000. In 2020, candidates increased their spending by 311% over the 2018 cycle. In total, 51 federal candidates have spent more than \$200,000.



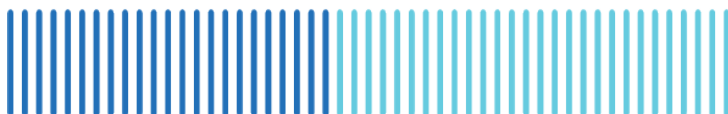
MAJOR FINDINGS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

CANDIDATES FOR FEDERAL OFFICE: 51



30 Women

21 Men



22 Candidates of Color



43 Democrats

8 Republicans



41 Congressional Candidates

8 Senatorial

2 Presidential



Bipartisan Support

Seventy-four percent of funds have been spent by Democrats, but Republican spending has increased over time, from just 10% of all funds in 2018 to 30% in 2020, demonstrating growing bipartisan support for this issue.



Up-Ballot Candidates

For the first time, in 2020 we also had candidates running for the highest office in the nation use Campaign Funds for Childcare. Eighty percent of the total funds used for childcare were spent by candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives, 16% by candidates running for Senate, and 4% by Presidential candidates.



Variation in Use

While the majority of Campaign Funds for Childcare was spent to support a candidate to fulfill campaign duties, \$18,385 was used to provide childcare at campaign events, not just for candidates, but for those in attendance or volunteering at the events.

Victories.

These first-time candidates used their Campaign Funds for Childcare—and won.



Representative Jahana Hayes is the first Black woman and the first Black Democrat elected to Congress from Connecticut.³⁶



Representative Ilhan Omar is the first Somali American and one of the first two Muslim women elected to Congress.³⁷



Representative Katie Porter is the first single mother raising young children while serving in Congress.³⁸



Representative Nikema Williams is the first woman to represent Georgia's 5th Congressional District, and the first Black woman to be elected Chair of the Georgia State Democratic Party.³⁹



Federal Candidates in Their Own Words

Vote Mama Foundation interviewed federal candidates and elected officials to learn more about how the ability to use Campaign Funds for Childcare was transformational to their campaigns and how they draw on their lived experience as working parents.

Representative Katie Porter, CA-45



Who thought that \$5,000 was sufficient for childcare? Who in Congress thinks this is right?

Rep. Porter is the first single mom with young children to serve in Congress. Porter told Samantha Bee, “If you’re full of bullshit, I’m coming for ya. I just don’t have time. I’m a single mom. The dinner’s burning. I’m late to something. I have 4,000 emails. My hair is frizzy. I haven’t shaved my legs in a week. No bullshit.”⁴⁰

Rep. Porter has been vocal about how her experience as a working parent informs her priorities as a legislator. Before she ran for Congress, she would set aside the maximum amount allowed each year for dependent care pre-savings accounts. She wondered, “Who thought that \$5,000 was sufficient for childcare? Who in Congress thinks this is right?” The \$5,000 limit had been set during the Reagan Administration and had never been increased or adjusted for inflation. In 2019, she introduced the Family Savings for Kids and Seniors Act, which would more than double the pretax amount families can set aside for child and elder care in flexible spending accounts, from \$5,000 to over \$11,000.⁴¹ Rep. Porter secured Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, a Republican from Washington state, who has given birth three times while serving in Congress, as a cosponsor of the bill.⁴²

In her first term, Rep. Porter also introduced the Help America Run Act, which would codify and expand the 2018 FEC ruling to allow federal candidates to use their campaign funds for elder or dependent care, as well as health insurance premiums while campaigning.⁴³ It passed the House in 2019 with bipartisan support but stalled in the Senate.⁴⁴

“As a single working mom of three young kids, I know firsthand about the barriers that stop many Americans from serving their country in public office. Most Americans my age are working parents—including many in the 45th District—but there are few of us with a seat at the table when it comes to writing legislation to make life easier for working families. My bill would clarify that campaign funds can be spent on childcare and enable more working parents to make the jump into public service.”⁴⁵

Electing moms matters. Legislators use their lived experience to inform what they fight for in office, and allowing the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare has opened the door for moms like Katie to run and lead.



Candace Valenzuela, Congressional Candidate, TX-24

Candace Valenzuela was the first Latina and the first African-American woman to serve on the Carrollton-Farmers Branch school board.⁴⁶ She was homeless for a time as a child after her mother finished serving in the army and could not pay the bills, and she recounts sleeping in a kiddie pool outside a gas station the night she and her mother fled domestic abuse. Valenzuela ran for Congress in 2020 with a newborn strapped to her chest and a toddler by her side. She has said that being able to use her Campaign Funds for Childcare was “campaign saving.”

“When I ran for school board it was under very different circumstances. I had childcare for my 1.5 year old, then my only child, and the [school] district I was running for was a fifth of the size of the 24th Congressional District. After work I would nurse my son in the daycare parking lot, give him to my partner, and then doorknock until his next feeding at 10:30pm. But Congress is such a different ball game. When we began talking about running I was super pregnant with our second child. Having the knowledge that we could use Campaign Funds for Childcare expenses because of Liuba’s groundbreaking work to get childcare covered for all moms pursuing federal office was a considerable factor.”

The cost of running for federal office can be so financially prohibitive that it keeps strong candidates from running. Valenzuela’s race became one of the most closely watched in the 2020 election, and she ultimately lost by just one point.⁴⁷ Thanks to her ability to use Campaign Funds for Childcare, Valenzuela helped pave the way for more working parents like her to run in the future.

Representative Eric Swalwell, CA-15

Rep. Eric Swalwell was first elected to Congress in 2012 and is one of the 14 dads who used Campaign Funds for Childcare during the 2020 election cycle. Rep. Swalwell recently spoke with Vote Mama Foundation while he was driving his daughter Cricket to the pediatrician and told us:

“My kids are three and two years old. My wife is also in the workforce, and recently received a promotion. Our family had to reevaluate whether we can afford to still do this job. Living between Washington, D.C. and San Francisco is incredibly expensive. On top of the official duties, there is an obligation to campaign for House candidates and be away a lot. It was taking a toll financially.”

Like so many other people on the cusp of the Gen X and Millennial generations, Rep. Swalwell has tens of thousands of dollars in school loan debt, and he and his wife just bought their first home as they were approaching 40 years old.

As a nation we collectively owe more than \$1.5 trillion dollars in school loan debt, yet just 11% of Congress members have school loans.⁴⁸ Nearly half who do are part of the younger and more diverse freshman legislators first elected in 2018.⁴⁹ Rep. Swalwell knows firsthand the expensive reality of student debt and has introduced critical legislation such as the *No Student Loan Interest Act* and the *Strengthening Forgiveness for Public Servants Act*.^{50,51} Rep. Swalwell also cosponsored the *Child Care for Working Families Act*.⁵² But until national reform can be enacted, he said:



“Campaign funds for childcare has allowed me to keep doing necessary political work, and having children has changed my policy perspective and priorities. When you have more mouths to feed and childcare expenses, you realize how much student loan debt takes out of your monthly paycheck.”

Being a father has also given him a different perspective. For instance, when traveling he’s watched as TSA security officers inspect his wife’s pumped breast milk, and has said that he’s, “hoping to introduce legislation to allow dignity to be able to travel with breast milk without it being opened.” Rep. Swalwell told Vote Mama Foundation, “My wife tells me, ‘You are a better public servant because you live these issues.’”



...Childcare has allowed me to keep doing necessary political work, and having children has changed my policy perspective and priorities.



I have an obligation in Congress to break down barriers that prevent Moms from serving and create a country that empowers women to have the professional and personal success they want, not what society thinks they should have.

Nikema Williams

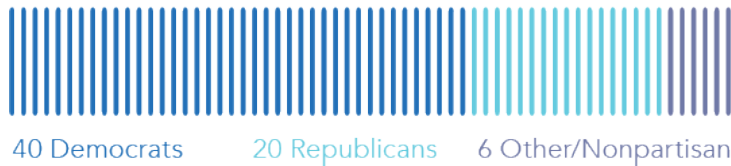
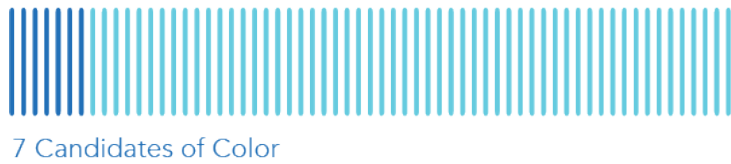
**REPRESENTATIVE NIKEMA WILLIAMS, GA-5
GEORGIA STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR**



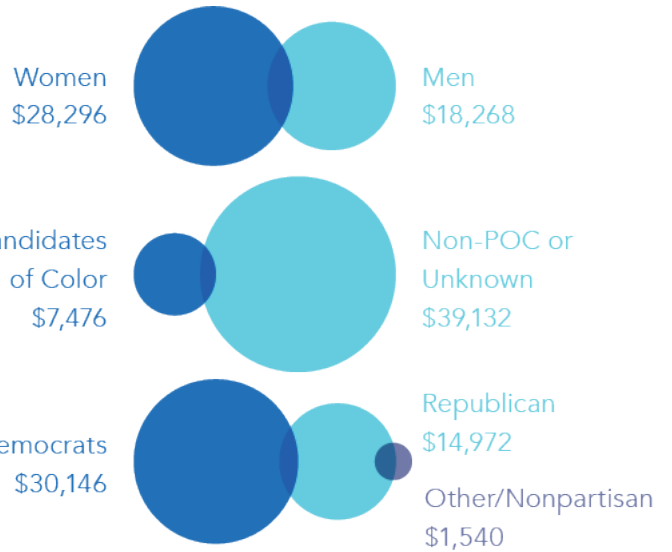
Campaign Funds for Childcare: Major Findings at the State Level

At least 66 state and local candidates have used campaign funds to pay for their childcare.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE AND LOCAL OFFICE: 66



TOTAL FUNDS SPENT FOR CHILDCARE: \$49,385



STATE AND LOCAL SPENDING ANALYSIS

61%

Spent by Women

While more individual fathers running at the state and local level have used their Campaign Funds for Childcare, 61% of campaign used were spent by women.

16%

Spent by People of Color

Just 16% of funds were spent by people of color.



Bipartisan Support

Sixty-five percent of the total funds used for childcare were spent by Democrats, 32% by Republicans, and 3% by third party, nonpartisan, or unaffiliated candidates.

Legislation v. Precedent.

JOANNA MENDOZA, CANDIDATE FOR ARIZONA STATE SENATE

While the 2018 Federal Election Commission ruling approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare for all candidates running for federal office, each state has its own campaign finance laws and entities authorized to provide oversight of elections and campaign spending and reporting. It is impossible to determine which state and local candidates (if any) have used campaign funds to pay for childcare from publicly available data in 22 states. For that reason, the research in this report cites data from 28 states only. Of these 28 states, 13 had records in their respective campaign finance databases on the use of campaign funds to pay for childcare since 2016.



Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization working with candidates to petition state and local election commissions and legislators to introduce legislation allowing the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. Twenty-two states have now approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare—11 through ethics commission rulings and 11 by passing legislation. Candidates are using their Campaign Funds for Childcare without a ruling in an additional 5 states.

While ethics commission rulings do empower the candidates that request them to use their Campaign Funds for Childcare, they do not necessarily provide a guarantee for all candidates. There is striking variability in both the scope of these rulings and how they are applied. Rulings that are specific to the requesting candidate's case do not apply directly to future candidates. Though they may set a valuable precedent for future candidates to use when arguing their cases, it is not required that they be upheld. Unlike legislation, even expansive rulings can easily be overturned by future commissions.

Vote Mama Foundation is working to expand and codify these rulings at all levels of government as well as to increase awareness of the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare to

ensure working parents are empowered to run for office and win. Of the 11 states that have passed legislation at the time of publication, 6 have had both Democratic and Republican cosponsors. In Utah and Minnesota, the legislation was championed by Republican prime sponsors, and in Colorado, California, New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Vermont, West Virginia, and Montana by Democratic prime sponsors. Legislation in Arkansas had both a Democratic and Republican prime sponsor. Both Democratic and Republican governors have signed this legislation into law, and each piece has had bipartisan support. We are excited to see movement in several states in early 2021 and are on track to be successful in passing legislation in all 50 states by 2023.

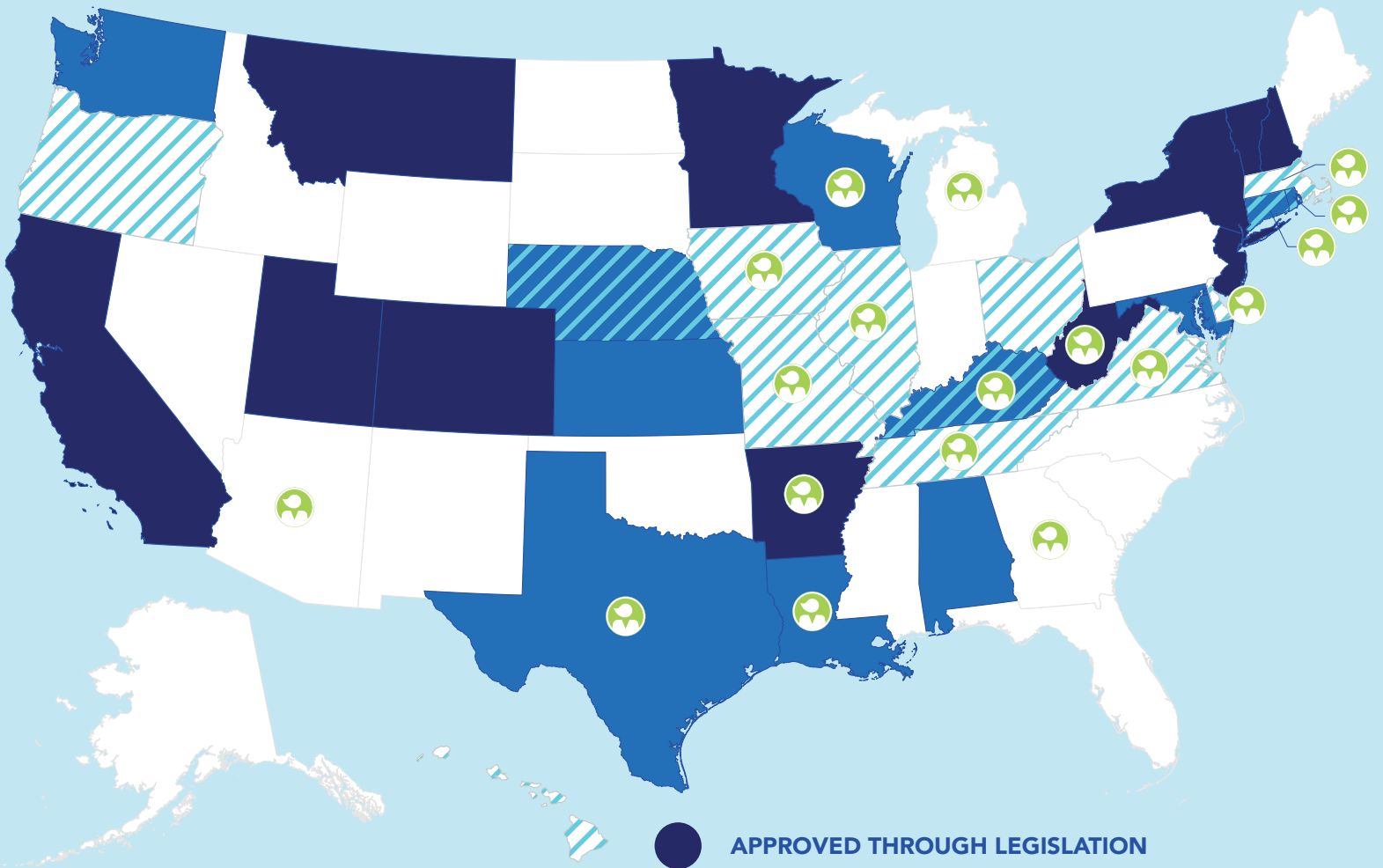


VIRGINIA DELEGATE KATHY TRAN

Photo: Timothy C. Wright for the Washington Post

Where We Stand.

Twenty-two states have now approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization working to expand and codify these rulings.





**APPROVED THROUGH
LEGISLATION**



**ETHICS COMMISSION
RULINGS**



**LEGISLATION INTRO-
DUCED, NOT PASSED**



**2021 VOTE
MAMA
PARTNER**

	APPROVED THROUGH LEGISLATION	ETHICS COMMISSION RULINGS	LEGISLATION INTRODUCED, NOT PASSED	2021 VOTE MAMA PARTNER
ALABAMA		Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 2018-04		
ALASKA				
ARIZONA				
ARKANSAS	Act 734	Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 2018-EC-001		
CALIFORNIA	Assembly Bill 220 - Political Reform Act of 1974: campaign funds: childcare costs			
COLORADO	Senate Bill 19-229 - Campaign Contributions Dependent Care Expenses			
CONNECTICUT		State Elections Enforcement Commission Declaratory Ruling 2019-02	Governor's Bill No. 14 (2020) Governor's Bill No. 883 & Senate Bill No. 761 (2021)	
DELAWARE			House Bill 90 (2021)	
FLORIDA				
GEORGIA				
HAWAII			Senate Bill 2989 (2020) Senate Bill 597 (2021)	
IDAHO				
ILLINOIS			Senate Bill 0033 (2020) Senate Bill 0536 & House Bill 3939 (2021)	
INDIANA				
IOWA			House File 475 (2019) Senate File 145 (2021)	



**APPROVED THROUGH
LEGISLATION**



**ETHICS COMMISSION
RULINGS**



**LEGISLATION INTRO-
DUCED, NOT PASSED**



**2021 VOTE
MAMA
PARTNER**

KANSAS		Governmental Ethics Commission Opinion No. 2018-04		
KENTUCKY		Informal Opinion	House Bill 22 (2021)	
LOUISIANA		Board of Ethics Docket No. 2018-1210		
MAINE				
MARYLAND		State Board of Elections Guidance on Child Care Expenses		
MASSACHUSETTS			Senate Bill 386 & House Bill 2898 (2018) Senate Bill 475 & House Bill 769 (2021)	
MICHIGAN				
MINNESOTA	House Bill 201			
MISSISSIPPI				
MISSOURI			House Bill 886 (2021)	
MONTANA	House Bill 221			
NEBRASKA		Accountability and Disclosure Commission Opinion No. 146	Legislative Bill 935 (2020)	
NEVADA				
NEW HAMPSHIRE	House Bill 651			
NEW JERSEY	Senate Bill 698			
NEW MEXICO				
NEW YORK	Assembly Bill 01108 & Senate Bill 02680-A			
NORTH CAROLINA				



**APPROVED THROUGH
LEGISLATION**



**ETHICS COMMISSION
RULINGS**



**LEGISLATION INTRO-
DUCED, NOT PASSED**



**2021 VOTE
MAMA
PARTNER**

NORTH DAKOTA			
OHIO		Senate Bill 211 (2020)	
OKLAHOMA			
OREGON		House Bill 3328 (2019)	
PENNSYLVANIA			
RHODE ISLAND	Regulation 7.3 D. 8.	Senate Bill 323 (2019) Senate Bill 60 (2021) House Bill 5289 (2021)	●
SOUTH CAROLINA			
SOUTH DAKOTA			
TENNESSEE		House Bill 0007 & Senate Bill 0086 (2019)	●
TEXAS	Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion 547		●
UTAH	House Bill 129		
VERMONT	House Bill 10		
VIRGINIA		House Bill 1299 - Campaign finance; prohibited personal use, child care exception. (2020) House Bill 1952 (2021)	●
WASHINGTON	Public Disclosure Commission Guidance on Allowable Uses of Campaign Funds		
WEST VIRGINIA	House Bill 2927		●
WISCONSIN	Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion 2018 ETH 01		●
WYOMING			



Approved Through Legislation

In interviews with Vote Mama Foundation, candidates and elected officials shared how legislation upholding the FEC’s 2018 ruling impacted their campaigns, and for some, their ability to run at all.

Minnesota was the trailblazer, passing an election omnibus bill in May of 1993 that allowed the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare when candidates are campaigning. The Minnesota Executive Branch and both chambers were led by Republican supermajorities at the time, and the policy advanced under a campaign modernization and good governance bill.

In 2019, Colorado, California, New York, New Hampshire, and Utah all passed Campaign Funds for Childcare. In 2020, New Jersey joined them, and in 2021, Arkansas, Vermont, West Virginia, and Montana also made it law.



Twenty six years after Minnesota, Utah became the second state to pass legislation to explicitly allow the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. Like Minnesota, the Executive Branch and both chambers were led by Republican majorities, and the policy received strong bipartisan support. Republican State House Prime Sponsor Craig Hall and Democratic State House Co-Sponsor Stephanie Pritchler introduced nearly identical proposals and testified to the House Committee that they were jointly pushing forward with the version sponsored by Hall.

Utah law prohibits the use of campaign funds for personal spending, and State Rep. Craig Hall wanted to clarify that childcare did not fall under those restrictions. “The intent of my bill is to make clear that in Utah, campaign funds can be used for childcare while campaigning.”⁵³ He added, “There are so many wonderful individuals in this state, so many great leaders, and they shouldn’t be discouraged from running for

office simply because they have childcare responsibilities.”⁵⁴ During a Utah House Government Operations Committee hearing, State Rep. Pitcher noted Grechen Shirley’s 2018 FEC ruling as precedent for their legislation, and their bill passed with an overwhelming majority.⁵⁵

Utah’s bill is already making a difference. In 2019, Republican State Representative Candice Pierucci won her election as the youngest woman ever elected to the Utah Legislature.⁵⁶

“For legislators in other states considering introducing legislation to allow Campaign Funds for Childcare know that it is a gamechanger. It breaks down a barrier that doesn’t have to be there. The seat came open in my district. As a young mother, you think about timing with family, you think you are going to wait. But why not me? I am a product of my community, I grew up here. I loved politics, I was qualified and prepared. There are local decisions about growth that are really important to me, and at the state level you can really make a difference. I worked at a conservative think tank. I had to quit my job to run full-time. In order to run and serve in elected office, I had to be able to pay for childcare.”



I had to quit my job to run full-time. In order to run and serve in elected office, I had to be able to pay for childcare.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE CANDICE PIERUCCI



New York



To truly support women as political leaders, we must look at the reality of their lives.

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
MAJORITY LEADER LAURIE A. CUMBO**

In October 2018, the New York Board of Elections issued an advisory opinion allowing candidates to use Campaign Funds for Childcare, and the New York City Council passed legislation to permit campaigns to cover childcare costs. New York City Council Majority Leader, Laurie A. Cumbo said, “To truly support women as political leaders, we must look at the reality of their lives. For many women, childcare is an insurmountable barrier when it comes to running for office.”⁵⁷ State Senator Shelley Mayer and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal then introduced legislation to codify the Board of Elections ruling. Senator Mayer told Vote Mama Foundation:

“Honestly, I saw that the board already took action, and we wanted to codify it into law. Right now there is an extreme appetite in the public to bring new people, more working families, into all levels of elected office. Both chambers of the legislature now have a number of young mothers and fathers, along with all those of us who are now older with grandchildren but have not forgotten how important childcare is to full participation in the economy and civic life. I know that I myself was discouraged to run when my children were young. Not so much for the money of childcare, but the strains on having to travel to Albany, the long hours. The work that Liuba did to create a national movement around the issue of Campaign Funds for Childcare was the real work. I can’t really take credit, Liuba’s work really made it an easy bill to run.”



New Jersey



In October 2020, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation to allow Campaign Funds for Childcare. “Public office holders and candidates often juggle parenting, their full-time careers, and their work in office and on the campaign trail,” the Governor said in a statement. “No one should be excluded from running for or serving in office because they cannot find or afford childcare. I am proud to sign this legislation that will allow those looking to serve our state to use campaign contributions for childcare.”⁵⁸

Christine Clarke, who ran for New Jersey State Assembly in 2019, said, “As a working-class mother of four young children who lived the need for this important bill during my 2019 campaign for state office, I can attest personally to what this means for New Jersey women.”⁵⁹ New Jersey State Senator and prime sponsor of the legislation, M. Teresa Ruiz said:

“I think it’s critical. Here’s the thing, the thing about New Jersey and how progressive we are here and in the legislature, yet I’m the first woman in the history of the New Jersey Senate to give birth while in office.”

CHRISTINE CLARKE, FORMER NEW JERSEY STATE ASSEMBLY CANDIDATE



California



My daughter couldn't be the reason I didn't run. She had to be the reason I ran.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BUFFY WICKS

In October 2019, the California legislature stepped up to make it easier for working parents to run. Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks teamed up with Assemblyman Rob Bonta and Lorena Gonzalez to champion this legislation. "Parents of young children bring an important perspective to policy-making and should be encouraged to enter the political arena and serve," said Bonta.⁶⁰ Assemblywoman Wicks told Vote Mama Foundation:

"An open seat in the state house came up. My daughter couldn't be the reason I didn't run. She had to be the reason I ran, so I declared when she was five months old. It is demanding. I did a lot with my daughter by my side. She is just growing up assuming that women speak in front of people. There are events I want to take her with me to, but others just didn't make sense. I didn't take advantage of the FEC ruling because I wasn't sure how it would apply or relate to California state laws, so I just made it work. But the sad reality is that there are so few women currently elected with younger children. We need diversity, but it is especially hard for lower income women to run for office. I am not wealthy, but I do come from privilege.

That is why once I was elected I co-authored the legislation to codify Campaign Funds for Childcare in California. As co-authors Assemblyman Rob Bonta, Lorena Gonzalez, and I recruited additional diverse men and women co-sponsors who all experienced the stress of being a candidate and parents running for office. Getting the bill through was fairly easy, because of the groundbreaking work Liuba Grechen Shirley had done with the FEC.

Use the new regulations for campaign funds, but don't give up the fight when you get into office. Once you win, make sure that you fight for affordable quality childcare for all of your constituents."

And that is exactly what happens when you elect working parents.



Ethics Commission Rulings

In our interviews with candidates and elected officials in states with only ethics commission rulings, Vote Mama Foundation discovered impacts of the disparate responses candidates experience when attempting to use Campaign Funds for Childcare.

Twelve states have approved the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare for candidates running for office either through an Ethics Commission or a Superior Court ruling: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. Arkansas first approved Campaign Funds for Childcare through an ethics ruling, and this year passed legislation codifying its ruling. In some states, the ethics ruling was easily approved and celebrated, and in others, candidates had to fight for approval.



When Catie Robinson ran for County Commissioner in Wichita County, Texas, her daughters were 18 months and three years old. “I face the typical challenges that come with running for office, but since I’m the primary caregiver in my house, I face some more unique challenges,” she said.⁶¹

After the 2018 FEC ruling, Catie submitted a request to the Texas Ethics Commission asking for permission to use her campaign funds to cover childcare.⁶² Her opponent, incumbent Wichita County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jeff Watts, compared caring for her children to boarding a dog. “Let’s say I didn’t have children,” he said, “and I just had a dog, and I felt like I needed to go on a campaign trip, and I put my dog in a kennel for a few days. Should I use campaign funds to pay for that, or should I pay for it out of my own pocket?”⁶³

Statements like these belittle the labor of caretakers and suggest that women hold the sole personal responsibility for childcare. Globally, women provide 75% of unpaid care work.⁶⁴ In the United States, women do almost twice as much childcare and domestic work as their male partners.⁶⁵ Dismissing this labor as the personal responsibility of women functions to reinforce the age-old message that the woman’s place is in the home, especially before her children are grown. As a result, women run for office at an older age than men and thus have fewer years to set policy priorities and advocate for gender parity.⁶⁶ Allowing the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare is crucial to creating a culture, and a government, that values women’s labor. It not only removes

a logistical and financial obstacle faced by women with young children but normalizes the image of women running for office.

In June 2018 the Texas Ethics Commission approved Robinson’s request.⁶⁷ “It’s not a question of being able to personally afford childcare. If the cost is directly related to the campaign, then campaign funds should be allowed to be used,” Robinson said.⁶⁸ “I really believe that this might be the deciding factor for lots of other Texans out there who may be on the fence about running for office, so I am really happy to be a part of it.”⁶⁹



I really believe that this might be the deciding factor for lots of other Texans out there who may be on the fence about running for office...

CATIE ROBINSON, FORMER WICHITA COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE



Louisiana



Childcare...is a barrier that disproportionately affects women and limits our access to political participation and representation.

MORGAN LAMANDRE, FORMER LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CANDIDATE

Morgan Lamandre, an attorney for a sexual assault victim advocacy group, ran for Louisiana House of Representatives in 2019. Lamandre, a mother of two children under five, submitted a request to use Campaign Funds for Childcare. Even though the Louisiana Board of Ethics had approved a similar request for Darrell Ourso nearly two decades earlier, they denied Lamandre.⁷⁰ Four men had previously used their Campaign Funds for Childcare—Darrell Ourso, Joel Boe, Lynn Jones, and U.S. Senator John Neely Kennedy, during his 2000 race for State Treasurer. Despite this, Lamandre faced the same grueling cultural pressure as Catie Robinson. But this time, it was from the Board of Ethics itself.

Board member Peppi Bruneau told Lamandre, “I don’t think you need to be raising money to run for an office to do that. I just think it’s a misplaced priority.”⁷¹ He continued, “Life is full of choices, and that’s one of them. Nobody forces you to run for public office. But you have a child, and that is your primary responsibility, to provide for that child.”⁷²

Vote Mama supported Lamandre in her appeal,⁷³ and the Louisiana Board of Ethics reversed their ruling in February 2019.⁷⁴ Lamandre became the first woman to use her campaign funds to cover the cost of childcare in Louisiana. Her case underscores the importance of codifying Campaign Funds for Childcare into law. She told Vote Mama Foundation:

“Childcare is already very expensive for working families, so to incur additional childcare costs to run for office is definitely a barrier, and it is a barrier that disproportionately affects women and limits our access to political participation and representation.

This is especially true in a state like Louisiana, where we typically rank at the very bottom in women’s representation, and any decision that creates additional barriers or makes it more difficult for women to run for and pursue political office can have a dangerous and chilling effect on the ability and willingness for women to be in positions where their perspectives and experiences will make for better policies that affect working families and children. We need more moms in office, and I am proud to be part of Vote Mama’s efforts to break down these needless barriers.”



Connecticut

Caitlin Clarkson Pereira's daughter Parker was just three years old when she ran for Connecticut House of Representatives in 2018. Connecticut has a voluntary Citizens' Election Program (CEP) that provides matching public funds for candidates running for office.⁷⁵ Clarkson Pereria raised \$5,100 to qualify for the matching grant of \$28,150.⁷⁶

In response to her advisory opinion request, Connecticut's all-male State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) declared CEP participants are barred from using campaign funds for childcare costs.⁷⁷ They noted they had offered advice to other candidates regarding "personal use" of campaign funds, saying, "We have looked at whether public funds could be spent to replace the tires of a car that suffered wear and tear crisscrossing the state during a campaign."⁷⁸

The SEEC ruled candidates could use privately raised political contributions for childcare, but candidates participating in the grant program would be held to "stricter standards" and could only use those funds to "directly further" the candidates' campaign.⁷⁹ Clarkson Pereira pointed out to Vote Mama Foundation, "But why do we have a program that exists to help more regular folks run for office, and then tell them they can't use it?"

The Chair of the FEC, Ellen L. Weintraub, wrote a letter urging the SEEC to reconsider their ruling, stating, "All manner of campaign expenses that free up candidates' time pass muster, because they so obviously directly further candidates' campaigns for office. Is it permissible for a campaign to pay for a car, rather than having a candidate walk 20 miles to an event? Of course. Is it permissible for a campaign to pay for a phone line for campaign headquarters so the candidate can call voters, rather than having to walk around the district to see them in person? Of course. Likewise, it must be permissible for a campaign to pay childcare expenses that free up the candidate to campaign." She added, "As I said when the FEC was issuing AO 2018-06, you still

can't use campaign funds for babysitting on date night. But if those funds are spent on childcare to expand the time that candidates are available to campaign, those childcare expenses directly further the candidate's campaign for office. In fact, dollar for dollar, childcare may be among the most efficacious expenses any campaign can incur."⁸⁰

"You're running around with young kids, you're trying to gauge how many hours you can afford for a babysitter, how many hours your mother-in-law can pitch in or how many hours your daughter can take being out door-knocking in 90 degree August weather," Clarkson Pereira said.⁸¹ "I'm tired and hot after an hour. How is she going to feel?"⁸²

In May 2019, Clarkson Pereira filed a lawsuit against the SEEC, and in August 2020, a Connecticut Superior Court Judge ruled that candidates running for office in Connecticut can use public campaign funds to reimburse childcare expenses as long as they are the direct result of campaign activities.⁸³

In January 2020, before Caitlin's case was decided, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont requested legislation in response to the SEEC decision stating private funds can be used for childcare expenses but not public-financed funds.⁸⁴ State Senator Martin M. Looney, State Senator Bob Duff, State Representative Joe Aresimowicz, and State Representative Matthew Ritter introduced legislation to allow candidates receiving public funding to be reimbursed for childcare services for any child under the age of 13 for whom the candidate is the parent or legal guardian, but it never made it to a vote.⁸⁵ Vote Mama Foundation has worked with Connecticut legislators to reintroduce Senate Bill No. 761 in 2021. Governor Ned Lamont's Council on Women and Girls also included Campaign Funds for Childcare in its 2021 legislative priorities. Vote Mama Foundation testified in favor of both bills in the March 19, 2021 Government Administration and Elections Committee hearing.



Candidates Creating Their Own Precedents

Candidates and elected officials in states with no ethics rulings or legislation shared the experience of setting precedent with Vote Mama Foundation in interviews.



Wyoming

Wyoming is one of six states where candidates are using their Campaign Funds for Childcare without legislation or an explicit ruling to help set a precedent. In 2020, Wyoming legislators killed a budget amendment that would have allowed them to expense the cost of childcare when in session.⁸⁶ Teton County Commissioner Natalia D. Macker told Vote Mama Foundation:

“We have no ethics board in Wyoming and very few laws surrounding the use of campaign funds. Also, there are very few parents with young children serving in the state legislature. I saw how difficult it is for them, and how horrible the debate was on a bill that would have made childcare a reimbursable expense for current state legislators. When it was on the floor, a legislator who is a rancher basically said, ‘I don’t get reimbursed for getting someone to watch my livestock.’

I am in a countywide election where I am in a strong position, and given my years of advocacy for advancing policies to remove barriers for women to take leadership positions, I decided I would just test it out. So, I used Campaign Funds for Childcare for my two sons. I submitted my campaign reports with childcare listed as an expense. I haven’t gotten any feedback, so I’m taking it as accepted, and I am excited by it. I hope this sets a new precedent and makes a difference in helping more moms and dads of young children know they can run for office too.”

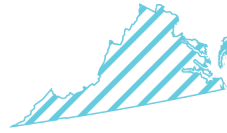


Arizona

Arizona election law is silent on the issue of childcare as a campaign expense. JoAnna Mendoza, a working mother and veteran, ran for Arizona State Senate in 2020. She told Vote Mama Foundation:

“I can’t think of a better way to show my son the importance of fighting for what you believe in than to demonstrate through my own example. Unfortunately, the campaign system in Arizona doesn’t support moms running for office. I went through training for candidates, but the training didn’t mention how to address the unique challenges that moms face as candidates. And so I did what any mom would do—when there isn’t a way we create one. During my primary, I decided to report it in my campaign expenses as a personal in-kind contribution, this way, I could at least track how much childcare expenses were related to my campaign without directly using donor funds.”

Mendoza’s reporting of personal in-kind contributions to pay for campaign-related childcare expenses sends a strong message that childcare is a legitimate campaign expense. Her case clearly illustrates how candidates in states where this expense is not explicitly allowed are forced to pay for campaign-related activities out of their own pocket, at a time when they are unlikely to have a personal income.



Virginia

Virginia could be considered the wild west of campaign finance. There are no limits on campaign donations from individuals, corporations, or political action committees, and while Virginia law does not explicitly allow for childcare expenses to be paid using campaign funds, it doesn't prohibit it either.

Former Delegate Debra Rodman told Vote Mama Foundation:

"When running for state office using campaign funds for childcare was not normalized and remains so. My staff advised me not to use our campaign funds for childcare for fear that I'd be attacked. Having young children while campaigning is already incredibly tough. Campaigning, working full time at work and at home is almost impossible. It is unsustainable. If we want a diversity of candidates, if we want equity in campaigns, we need to make childcare part of the process."

Without more moms in office, and especially non-white moms and those with diverse backgrounds, we miss out on the critical voice of women with life experiences who can serve a progressive agenda. In 2017, Jennifer Carroll Foy was pregnant with twins while running for the Virginia House of Delegates, and nearly died after giving birth. Like many Black women, she felt her pain was dismissed by doctors—a well-documented phenomenon that has contributed to a shocking maternal mortality rate among Black women, who are 243% more likely to die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related conditions than white women.⁸⁷ Once elected, she enacted essential legislation to address racial health disparities, ensuring that fewer Black women experience the same terror she did. She recently stepped down as a Delegate to focus full-time on building a grassroots movement in her campaign for Governor. In an interview with Vote Mama Foundation, she said:

"I used to pay for childcare out of pocket, but I now use campaign funds to pay for it after receiving a legal brief from my attorneys saying nothing in Virginia prohibits the use of campaign funds for childcare. Without that childcare, especially during a pandemic, there is no doubt in my mind that I would not be able to complete the tasks needed to excel in a campaign."

Delegate Kathy Tran introduced a campaign finance bill in January 2020 that would have affirmed the use of campaign funds to pay for a candidate's childcare expenses incurred as a direct result of campaign activity, but the bill stalled in the House Committee on Privileges and Elections.⁸⁸ State Senator Jennifer McClellan was the first member of the House of Delegates in 2010 to give birth while in office. Also running for Governor, she told Vote Mama Foundation:

"I have heard candidates express fear and hesitancy to use campaign funds for childcare expenses. This creates an unnecessary barrier for parents and lower income heads of households - particularly women - from seeking office. Such barriers undermine the right of Virginians to full representation in our state and local democracy."

House Bill 1952, which also includes broader campaign finance regulations, was introduced by Delegates Marcus Simon, Kelly Convirs-Fowler, Dan Helmer, and Kaye Kory. It passed the Virginia House of Delegates in January 2021, was unanimously approved by the Virginia Senate Privileges and Elections Committee, and sent to the floor for a vote.⁸⁹ The bill was sent back to the Privileges and Elections Committee for further debate regarding a portion of the bill unrelated to Campaign Funds for Childcare. Vote Mama is now advocating for an opinion by Attorney General Mark Herring regarding Campaign Funds for Childcare. It is our hope that the Attorney General will issue a favorable opinion and that the legislation will succeed as a stand alone bill codifying Campaign Funds for Childcare in 2022.



If we want a diversity of candidates, if we want equity in campaigns, we need to make childcare part of the process.

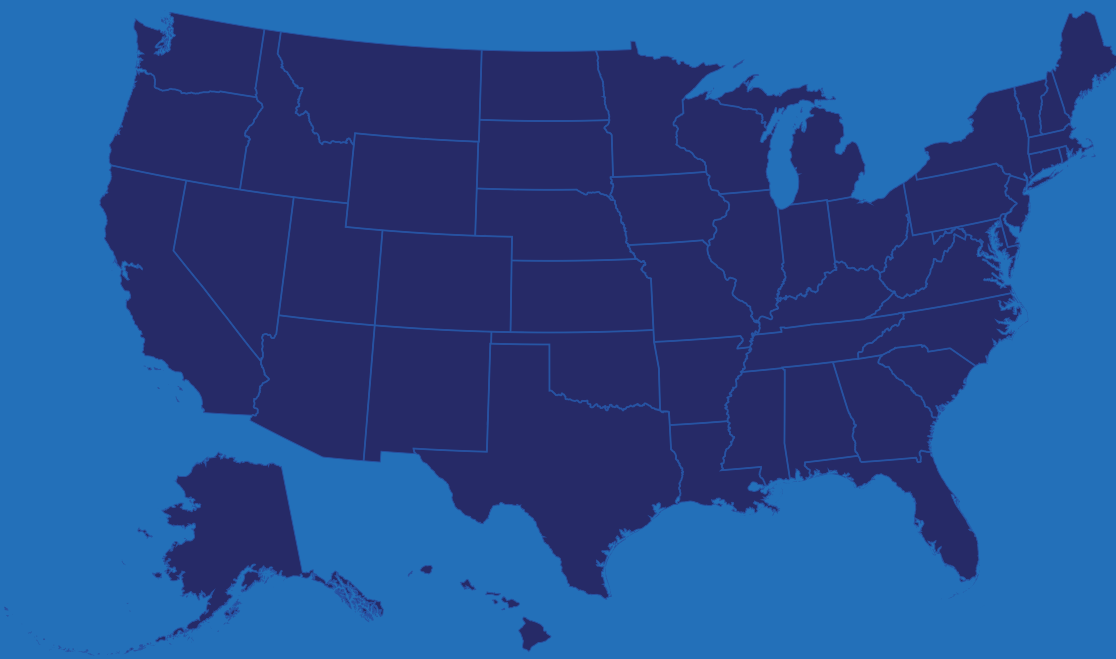
FORMER DELEGATE DEBRA RODMAN



Vote Mama Foundation Goal

All 50 States by 2023

Vote Mama Foundation is working toward approval of Campaign Funds for Childcare in all 50 states by 2023. To date, 11 states have enacted legislation, and Vote Mama Foundation is partnering with 18 states in 2021. This legislative session, 14 states have introduced bills, 4 of which have already passed into law. We are hopeful many more will follow.



Recommendations



1

Codify the Use of Campaign Funds for Childcare Through State Legislation.

Advisory opinions can be overturned, whereas legislation is enduring and sends a powerful message of validation to potential candidates. Women make up more than half of the U.S. population but only 28% of the 117th Congress. Only 6% of Congress are mothers of children under 18 years of age. Ensuring candidates at every level of government can use their Campaign Funds for Childcare removes a significant barrier women face in running for office.

2

Approach Campaign Funds for Childcare as a Bipartisan Issue.

Republicans and Democrats running at the federal and state levels have used their Campaign Funds for Childcare. Of the 11 states that have passed legislation, 6 have had bipartisan cosponsors. In 2 states, the legislation was championed by Republican prime sponsors in Republican supermajorities. In 8 states, the legislation was championed by all Democratic prime sponsors. Seven Republican Governors and 4 Democratic Governors have signed Campaign Funds for Childcare into law. Allowing Campaign Funds for Child-care is an opportunity for both parties to increase diversity in their candidate pipe-lines without affecting state budgets.

3

Normalize the Use of Campaign Funds for Childcare.

The 2018 FEC ruling set an important precedent and helps state legislators gain support to champion this issue in their own states. However, passing legislation or securing an ethics commission ruling is not enough. We must also normalize the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare. Liuba Grechen Shirley's public petition and her and other candidates' willingness to openly discuss the financial challenges of running for office as a working parent with small children helps do this. The Vote Mama Foundation has created a pledge to garner broad support of Campaign Funds for Childcare. [Sign the pledge and find more action steps on the Vote Mama Foundation website.](#)

Conclusion

Virginia State Senator Jennifer McClellan told Vote Mama Foundation that when she introduced legislation requiring school boards to have lactation policies for employees and students:

“I was asked in the committee by a 70-year-old white man, ‘Why can’t she just wait until her lunch break?’ I explained that when you wait too long to pump or nurse, your breasts get engorged, and you can get an infection. I then had to explain why lactating mothers can’t simply train their breasts to produce milk around the work schedule.”

Lived experience affects how policy is approached, and we are lacking many facets of the American experience at all levels of government. We are missing critical voices in our representation—the voices of mothers. Jean Sindzak, associate director of the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University said “For congressional candidates around the country to be able to use campaign funds for child-care expenses is extremely significant in terms of breaking down the institutional barriers to women running for office.”⁹⁰ The results of our research agree: In the single election cycle since the FEC’s ruling in 2018, campaign funds spent on childcare by federal candidates increased by 311%.

This is why Vote Mama Foundation is working to ensure that every state and local candidate will be able to use their Campaign Funds for Childcare by 2023. We want more working parents, particularly mothers with young children, to run for office—and win. There are many institutional barriers that are holding us back. The first barrier is paying for childcare.

When the voices of moms are heard, the needs of families are met.



Methodology

Qualitative

From July 15, 2020 to November 15, 2020, Vote Mama Foundation reached out to more than 60 legislators, former legislators, candidates, and former candidates through email, social media, LinkedIn, and cold calls. Twenty interviews were conducted via Google Hangouts, Zoom, and by phone. All interviewees reviewed and consented to publish the quotations included in the report.

Quantitative

FEDERAL LEVEL

Campaign finance data about congressional and presidential candidates was obtained by searching campaign spending disbursements for the 2018 and 2020 election cycles using the following keywords: "childcare," "child care," "daycare," "day care," "nursery school," "babysit," "baby sit," "babysitting," "baby sitting," "babysitter," "baby sitter." The FEC database was also searched for transactions. Demographic data was retrieved from the Biographical Directory of Congress and the United States House of Representatives and Senate websites. When necessary, this information was supplemented by searching candidates' websites and social media.

STATE LEVEL

Candidate information including position, party affiliation, gender, and racial self-identity were found using publicly available data from campaign finance websites, candidate websites, and local news sources. Campaign finance databases hosted by regulatory agencies in all 50 states were searched for transactions. Data from the following 13 states were used in this report: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. We were unable to analyze data from 22 states due to lack of robust filing requirements and inability to search transaction descriptions in the state's database, and in 15 states we were unable to locate records of any candidate using campaign funds to pay for childcare since 2016. Given these limitations, we do not claim this report to be an exhaustive record of the use of Campaign Funds for Childcare at the state and local levels. However, we believe our methods were robust and the state-level data demonstrate useful findings.

The full data is available on the report's web page in downloadable Excel spreadsheets at the Vote Mama Foundation website.



About Vote Mama Foundation

Vote Mama Foundation is the leading source of research and analysis about the political participation of mothers in the United States. We work toward gender equity by breaking the barriers mothers face running for office, normalizing mothers of young children running for office, and enabling legislators to pass family-friendly policies.

Vote Mama Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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Disclosure

Vote Mama PAC, a distinct legal entity, proudly supported Candace Valenzuela, JoAnna Mendoza, MJ Hegar, Morgan Lamandre, Nikema Williams, Christine Clark, Kathy Tran, Jennifer Carroll Foy and Grace Meng. Congresswoman Katie Porter, Congresswoman Grace Meng, JoAnna Mendoza, and Candace Valenzuela serve on the Vote Mama PAC Advisory Committee.

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