

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1623

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## AN ACT

To amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide for the treatment of payments for child care and other personal use services as an authorized campaign expenditure, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
3 “Help America Run Act”.

4 (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Everyday Americans experience barriers to  
6 entry before they can consider running for office to  
7 serve their communities.

8 (2) Current law states that campaign funds  
9 cannot be spent on everyday expenses that would  
10 exist whether or not a candidate were running for  
11 office, like rent and food. While the law seems neu-  
12 tral, its actual effect is to privilege the independently  
13 wealthy who want to run, because given the de-  
14 mands of running for office, candidates who must  
15 work to pay for childcare or to afford health insur-  
16 ance are effectively being left out of the process,  
17 even if they have sufficient support to mount a via-  
18 ble campaign.

19 (3) Thus current practice favors those prospec-  
20 tive candidates who do not need to rely on a regular  
21 paycheck to make ends meet. The consequence is  
22 that everyday Americans who have firsthand knowl-  
23 edge of the importance of stable childcare, a safety  
24 net, or great public schools are less likely to get a  
25 seat at the table. This governance by the few is anti-  
26 thetical to the democratic experiment, but most im-

1 portantly, when lawmakers do not share the con-  
2 cerns of everyday Americans, their policies reflect  
3 that.

4 (4) These circumstances have contributed to a  
5 Congress that does not always reflect everyday  
6 Americans. The New York Times reported in 2019  
7 that fewer than 5 percent of representatives cite  
8 blue-collar or service jobs in their biographies. A  
9 2015 survey by the Center for Responsive Politics  
10 showed that the median net worth of lawmakers was  
11 just over \$1 million in 2013, or 18 times the wealth  
12 of the typical American household.

13 (5) These circumstances have also contributed  
14 to a governing body that does not reflect the nation  
15 it serves. For instance, women are 51% of the  
16 American population. Yet even with a record number  
17 of women serving in the One Hundred Sixteenth  
18 Congress, the Pew Research Center notes that more  
19 than three out of four Members of this Congress are  
20 male. The Center for American Women And Politics  
21 found that one third of women legislators surveyed  
22 had been actively discouraged from running for of-  
23 fice, often by political professionals. This type of dis-  
24 couragement, combined with the prohibitions on  
25 using campaign funds for domestic needs like

1 childcare, burdens that still fall disproportionately  
2 on American women, particularly disadvantages  
3 working mothers. These barriers may explain why  
4 only 10 women in history have given birth while  
5 serving in Congress, in spite of the prevalence of  
6 working parents in other professions. Yet working  
7 mothers and fathers are best positioned to create  
8 policy that reflects the lived experience of most  
9 Americans.

10 (6) Working mothers, those caring for their el-  
11 derly parents, and young professionals who rely on  
12 their jobs for health insurance should have the free-  
13 dom to run to serve the people of the United States.  
14 Their networks and net worth are simply not the  
15 best indicators of their strength as prospective pub-  
16 lic servants. In fact, helping ordinary Americans to  
17 run may create better policy for all Americans.

18 (c) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to ensure  
19 that all Americans who are otherwise qualified to serve  
20 this Nation are able to run for office, regardless of their  
21 economic status. By expanding permissible uses of cam-  
22 paign funds and providing modest assurance that testing  
23 a run for office will not cost one’s livelihood, the Help  
24 America Run Act will facilitate the candidacy of represent-

1 atives who more accurately reflect the experiences, chal-  
2 lenges, and ideals of everyday Americans.

3 **SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS FOR CHILD CARE AND**  
4 **OTHER PERSONAL USE SERVICES AS AU-**  
5 **THORIZED CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE.**

6 (a) PERSONAL USE SERVICES AS AUTHORIZED CAM-  
7 PAIGN EXPENDITURE.—Section 313 of the Federal Elec-  
8 tion Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30114) is amended  
9 by adding at the end the following new subsection:

10 “(d) TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS FOR CHILD CARE  
11 AND OTHER PERSONAL USE SERVICES AS AUTHORIZED  
12 CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE.—

13 “(1) AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES.—For pur-  
14 poses of subsection (a), the payment by an author-  
15 ized committee of a candidate for any of the per-  
16 sonal use services described in paragraph (3) shall  
17 be treated as an authorized expenditure if the serv-  
18 ices are necessary to enable the participation of the  
19 candidate in campaign-connected activities.

20 “(2) LIMITATIONS.—

21 “(A) LIMIT ON TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAY-  
22 MENTS.—The total amount of payments made  
23 by an authorized committee of a candidate for  
24 personal use services described in paragraph (3)  
25 may not exceed the limit which is applicable

1 under any law, rule, or regulation on the  
2 amount of payments which may be made by the  
3 committee for the salary of the candidate (with-  
4 out regard to whether or not the committee  
5 makes payments to the candidate for that pur-  
6 pose).

7 “(B) CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN  
8 AMOUNT OF SALARY PAID TO CANDIDATE.—To  
9 the extent that an authorized committee of a  
10 candidate makes payments for the salary of the  
11 candidate, any limit on the amount of such pay-  
12 ments which is applicable under any law, rule,  
13 or regulation shall be reduced by the amount of  
14 any payments made to or on behalf of the can-  
15 didate for personal use services described in  
16 paragraph (3), other than personal use services  
17 described in subparagraph (D) of such para-  
18 graph.

19 “(C) EXCLUSION OF CANDIDATES WHO  
20 ARE OFFICEHOLDERS.—Paragraph (1) does not  
21 apply with respect to an authorized committee  
22 of a candidate who is a holder of Federal office.

23 “(3) PERSONAL USE SERVICES DESCRIBED.—

24 The personal use services described in this para-  
25 graph are as follows:

1           “(A) Child care services.

2           “(B) Elder care services.

3           “(C) Services similar to the services de-  
4           scribed in subparagraph (A) or subparagraph  
5           (B) which are provided on behalf of any de-  
6           pendent who is a qualifying relative under sec-  
7           tion 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

8           “(D) Health insurance premiums.”.

9           (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
10 this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment  
11 of this Act.

          Passed the House of Representatives October 29,  
2019.

Attest:

*Clerk.*

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