

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1623

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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