

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2540

As Passed House:
February 18, 2020

Title: An act relating to clarifying when campaign funds may be used for child care expenses.

Brief Description: Clarifying when campaign funds may be used for child care expenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Maycumber, Lekanoff, Chapman, Senn, Rude, Mead, Walen, Duerr, Chambers, Riccelli, Harris, Van Werven, Stonier, Kloba, Leavitt, Davis, Doglio, Dufault, Pollet and Macri.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/29/20, 1/31/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/18/20, 96-2.

Brief Summary of Bill

- States that child care expenses are campaign-related expenses that may be reimbursed from a candidate's contributions account if the expenses were incurred solely as a result of the campaign.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Gregerson, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Dolan, Hudgins, Mosbrucker and Smith.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

Washington law regulates the receipt, disclosure, and use of campaign contributions to political candidates. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) requires candidates to file a registration form within two weeks of becoming a candidate.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

All monetary contributions received by a candidate must be deposited by the candidate or the candidate's staff or treasurer into an account established and designated for that purpose. Expenditures from the account must be authorized by the candidate or a person named on the candidate's registration form.

Contributions may be used for personal expenses of a candidate, the candidate's treasurer, or another individual under limited circumstances:

- reimbursement for or payments to cover lost earnings incurred as a result of campaigning;
- reimbursement for direct out-of-pocket expenses related to the election campaign and postelection activities; and
- repayment of loans made by the candidate to political committees, although a candidate may not be reimbursed for more than \$4,700 (adjusted for inflation by rule) for loans to the candidate's own authorized committee.

The PDC website offers the following guidance: "Child care can be reimbursed if the expense would not have occurred but for the campaign. A candidate also can be reimbursed for the use of personal property, including cellphones and vehicles, provided the expenses are prorated for the portion of campaign use."

Summary of Bill:

The bill states that child care expenses are considered campaign-related expenses if they were incurred solely as a result of the campaign.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The PDC has set this policy in its guidelines, but it is good to put it in law. It is time consuming to campaign, and this policy helps individuals with small children. The state needs to hear their voices representing the community. This policy will help to recruit a diverse group of people to campaign.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The PDC has adopted a rule to this effect, and it is a permanent rule. This policy was consistent agency practice even before the rule was in place. The rule did not reflect a change in policy that garnered controversy or confusion. Campaigns had been reimbursing child care expenses in the past, and that is proper so long as it is specifically related to campaign time.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Maycumber, prime sponsor.

(Other) Sean Flynn, Public Disclosure Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.