

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5855

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to the use of campaign funds to reimburse expenses for child care and other caregiving services.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of campaign funds to reimburse expenses for child care and other caregiving services.

Sponsors: Senators Lovelett, Nobles, Wilson, C., Billig, Das, Hasegawa, Hawkins, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Nguyen, Randall, Saldaña, Stanford and Trudeau.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/21/22, 2/23/22 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- States that candidates may use campaign contributions to reimburse themselves for the direct care, protection, and supervision of a child or person with a disability or medical condition for whom the candidate has a direct caregiving responsibility, so long as those expenses were incurred solely as a result of the candidate's campaign activities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Valdez, Chair; Lekanoff, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dolan, Graham and Gregerson.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

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

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.

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 candidates may use campaign contributions to reimburse themselves for the direct care, protection, and supervision of a child or person with a disability or medical condition for whom the candidate has a direct caregiving responsibility, so long as those expenses were incurred solely as a result of the candidate's campaign activities.

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) None.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The PDC supports the intent of encouraging more people to run for office, but the provisions of this bill are already authorized under current law. There is already a PDC rule that uses child care as an example of an appropriate use of funds if it is campaign related. The bill might have the unintended consequence of people thinking that this is not already allowed.

Persons Testifying: Sean Flynn, Public Disclosure Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.