



**Testimony Submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws
In support of H.639/S.408 An Act supporting parents running for public office
By Linda Freedman, LWVMA Election and Voting Laws Specialist
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts strongly supports adding child care for candidates' children as a legal campaign expense for office seekers.

This bill will correct a serious omission in our campaign finance laws, which do not allow reimbursement for candidates' child care expenses from campaign funds. Currently, candidates must pay out-of-pocket for these services or depend on the unpaid services of relatives and other volunteers to care for their children.

The Federal Election Commission has already ruled that candidates for federal offices may use campaign funds to cover child care expenses. Several states have adopted this practice as well. Massachusetts should do the same.

This bill will not involve any taxpayer money being used for candidate child care; it simply makes child care an allowed use of funds raised by a candidate's campaign.

If approved, this bill would help parents who seek elective office and encourage more parents with young children to consider campaigning.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, which represents 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens. Sometimes child care is needed to allow that active participation.

We urge you to report H.639/S.408 quickly and favorably out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.