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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 21-H 5289,
RELATING TO RHODE ISLAND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND
EXPENDITURE REPORTING
February 10, 2021**

The ACLU of Rhode Island strongly supports this bill, which would allow candidates to use campaign funds for childcare expenses associated with running for office.

The balancing of family and politics is always difficult, but it is a particularly significant burden on women candidates. Presently, candidates for office can use their campaign funds for such things as travel, food and beverages, and even purchases of graduation and marriage gifts. Under the circumstances, it is impossible to make a fair or legitimate argument against including childcare expenses in that list.

Federal campaign finance rulings recognize the importance of this and authorize the use of campaign funds to pay for candidates' childcare, and the state Board of Elections has recently addressed the issue positively as well. It is time for the General Assembly to codify this practice into state law.

As a matter of fundamental fairness, the ACLU urges approval of this legislation. Thank you for considering our views.

Submitted by: Steven Brown, Executive Director