

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, committee members: my name is Christina Ouellette, and I am a resident of the town of Bradley in Penobscot County. I am here today to make my voice heard in strong opposition to LD 818.

I am a 21-year active duty Air Force veteran and have been retired for 22 years. During my time in service, not once did I have the opportunity to use taxpayer funds to pay for any dependent care: not stateside, not at a dependent-restricted tour in Korea, and not for two deployments to Saudi Arabia. It was my responsibility to ensure I was able to care for my own dependents. Why should it be any different for political candidates?

In 2014, I was forced to resign from my position at Eastern Maine Medical Center after my mother was diagnosed with both Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Not once did I think I was entitled to unemployment or other taxpayer funds while I was out of work caring for my mom. That was my own responsibility. Why should it be different for political candidates?

In my opinion, this bill just screams "entitlement" by elected officials who feel it is their right to force their own constituents, as well as all other Maine taxpayers, to fund something that they themselves should be responsible for. Good luck explaining that to people who are already being bled to death by the unnecessary spending and taxing in our state, while they themselves are struggling to put food on the table, pay for healthcare and medications, and yes, even to pay for care for their own dependents. I'm sure they will be amazed at the hypocrisy of this gesture.

Under the Clean Election Act, Maine taxpayers are already forced to fund campaigns for people who they would never vote for. Requiring them to additionally fund a candidate's dependent care expenses during their campaign is not only insulting and a slap in the face, it is a grossly egregious use of tax dollars.

I would submit to you that the wording of this bill is so vague that it sounds like any type of expenses would be covered, even just babysitting fees while a candidate knocks on doors. I would also submit to you that if a candidate is not able to pay for their own needed dependent

caregiving services, then maybe they shouldn't run for office or should at least wait until they can afford to pay.

Don't put more burdens on the people of Maine. Your job is to ensure that spending of our tax dollars are for items and services that benefit most, not a privileged few. I urge you to vote "ought not to pass" on this bill.