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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton introducing
**LD 818 An Act to Allow Expenditure of Maine Clean Election Act Funding for the
Care of Candidates' Dependents**
Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and esteemed members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Representative Holly Eaton, and I proudly represent House District 15, which includes Deer Isle, Stonington, Brooklin, Tremont, Southwest Harbor, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut, and Vinalhaven. I am submitting testimony in strong support of LD 818, which allows Clean Elections candidates to use campaign funds for the direct care of their dependent family members when that care is necessary for the candidate to participate in campaign activities.

As a Clean Elections candidate and a single parent, I know firsthand the challenges that come with balancing a campaign with caregiving responsibilities. Running for office is a full-time commitment, requiring long hours at public events, meeting with constituents, and traveling across the district. For candidates who are also parents or caregivers, the financial burden of securing necessary dependent care can serve as a major barrier to participation in the democratic process.

This bill recognizes that caregiving is a fundamental part of many candidates' lives and ensures that Clean Elections candidates—who have already committed to running a publicly funded campaign—are not forced to choose between engaging with voters and caring for their families. Importantly, the bill maintains strict guidelines by specifying that these funds can only be used for dependent care that is directly connected to the candidate's campaign activities and would not otherwise be necessary.

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor,
Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

LD 818 is not just about supporting candidates; it is about strengthening our democracy by ensuring that individuals from all walks of life, including working parents and caregivers, have an equal opportunity to run for office. Maine has long been a leader in clean and fair elections, and this bill further strengthens our commitment to reducing financial barriers to public service.

I urge the committee to support this important measure and ensure that no candidate is forced to choose between their campaign and their caregiving responsibilities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Representative Holly Eaton
House District 15