

Dear Rep Holvey and Rules Committee,

I want to share my enthusiastic support for House Bill 4104 which would allow campaign funds to be used for health care premium expenses as well as caregiving costs.

I ran for office in 2017, and while I worked hard and won, I had several privileges along the way: employer sponsored health insurance and family that assisted with my various responsibilities during my campaign. I would not have had the capacity to run a small, grassroots campaign as a first-time candidate without these resources. Running for office is exhausting—the phone that will not stop ringing, the endorsement questionnaires, interview and debate prep, etc. Friends and family cheer you on but do not understand this world. So many of us who run for office are also juggling a job at the same time; but every day, candidates are motivated to knock on doors and share our vision with the community.

Whether it be special districts, school boards, the state legislature or Congress, we desperately need to make sure that those in positions of power are working to address the barriers to running for office. The voices of women, parents, young people, people of color and other marginalized identities are missing from the decision making table. Their lived experience and the issues they are passionate about should shape policy.

I know the majority of those in the legislature share my opinion that running for office should be more accessible—how else will we ensure that local, state-wide government positions and beyond are more representative of those we serve? Allowing campaign funds to address two significant barriers is an essential first step in the journey to a more representative government.

Thank you to the Chief Sponsors of this bill, Representative Power, Senator Taylor, Representative Neron, Representative Helt, and Representative McKeown, for bringing this to the 2020 session.

All the best,
Felicitia Monteblanco
Aloha, Oregon