



State Senator  
**TINA MAHARATH**

**3rd District**

**Sponsor Testimony**  
**Senator Tina Maharath**  
**Senate Bill 211**  
**Government Oversight and Reform Committee**  
**Tuesday, January 21, 2020**

Good afternoon, Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Craig, Vice Chair Huffman and members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 211, legislation that is intended to allow candidates for elected office in Ohio to use campaign funds to cover the cost of child care.

The costs of childcare are a huge barrier to running for office for many parents when considering doing so. This is especially true for potential candidates with lower incomes. Under this legislation, candidates running for state office in Ohio will be permitted to use their campaign funds to pay for childcare, just like they can other expenses. This will allow for more socioeconomically diverse candidates to pursue elected office in Ohio.

In Ohio, the average annual price to care for an infant in a childcare center is \$10,009, totaling about 11.0% of the income of the average married couple. This is similar to the cost of a year of tuition at a public university. While the childcare costs for a single child with two parents are already exorbitant, the financial burden increases for single parents or for parents with more children.

As we all know, running for elected office requires committing many hours of your time, which greatly increased the need for childcare for candidates with children. The Federal Election Commission recently ruled that candidates for federal office may use campaign funds for childcare, and legislation allowing for the same has been passed in the states of Utah, Colorado and New York. Other states such as Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas and Wisconsin have issued favorable advisory opinions on the matter by their respective elections and ethics commissions. The purpose of this legislation is to make sure that citizens from all backgrounds and socioeconomic standing have the opportunity to run for elected office in Ohio.

I look forward to a thoughtful legislative process and appreciate your attention to this important issue. I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 211. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.