

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2018

Lisa J. Stevenson, Acting General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
1050 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20463

Re: Advisory Opinion Request 2018-06 (Shirley)

Dear Ms. Stevenson,

We write in support of the request of Liuba Grechen Shirley and her campaign committee to allow campaign funds to be used for campaign-related childcare expenses so that she may engage in campaign activities in her run for Congress. For a parent to seek federal office and participate in requisite campaign events and travel, childcare is a necessary expense and should not constitute a “personal use” of campaign funds under 11 C.F.R. 113.1(g).

The Commission decided a similar question in AO 1995-42 (McCrery), in which the Commission allowed a candidate to pay for childcare expenses with campaign funds because “childcare expenses [were] incurred only as a direct result of campaign activity and would not otherwise exist.”¹

During an election cycle in which a record number of women are running for office, the Commission’s opinion on the use of campaign funds to pay for campaign-related childcare expenses will have nationwide ramifications.² Women and working parents face many barriers in running for public office, including meeting childcare obligations during campaigns that require frequent travel and evening and weekend events. As we work to build a political environment that is fair to candidates of all backgrounds, the Commission has a role to play in fairly enforcing and administering federal campaign finance laws.

In the case of Ms. Shirley and others like her, we urge the Commission to recognize childcare as a necessary campaign-related expense which may be paid for with campaign funds. While the original 10-day comment period on AOR 2018-06 expired on April 16, 2018, we urge you to accept this comment given the time required to develop and submit thoughtful input and the weight of the FEC’s decision on this matter.

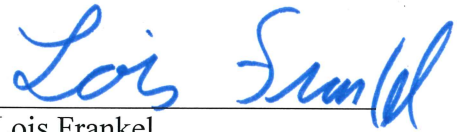
¹ See FEC Adv. Op. 1995-42 (McCrery)

² See Danielle Kurtzleben, More Than Twice As Many Women Are Running for Congress in 2018 Compared with 2016, NPR (Feb. 20, 2018), available at <https://www.npr.org/2018/02/20/585542531/more-than-twice-as-many-women-are-running-for-congress-in-2018-compared-to-2016>

Sincerely,



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



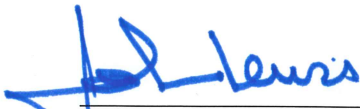
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



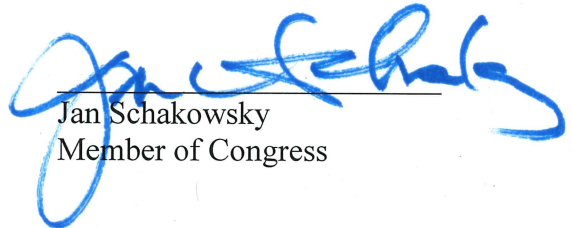
Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



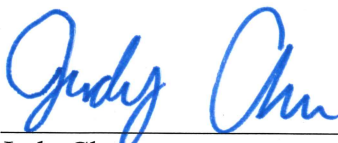
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



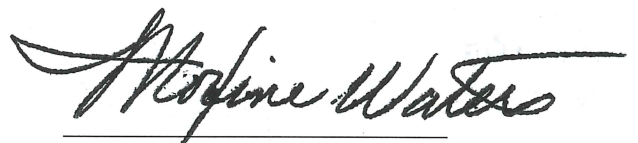
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



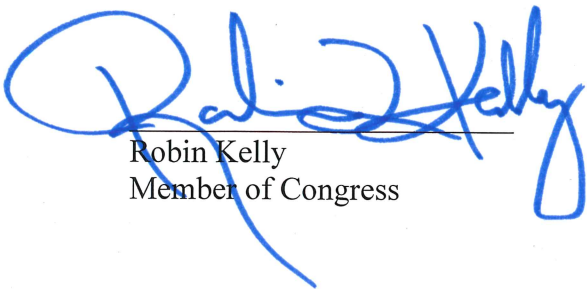
Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



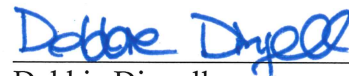
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



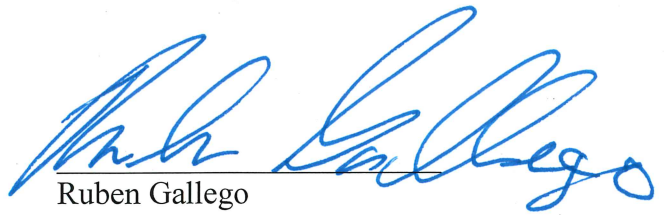
Robin Kelly
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



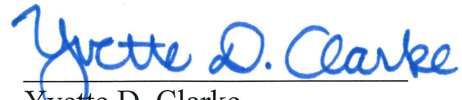
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



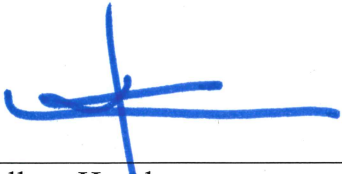
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



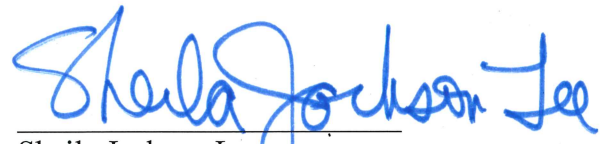
Kathleen Rice
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



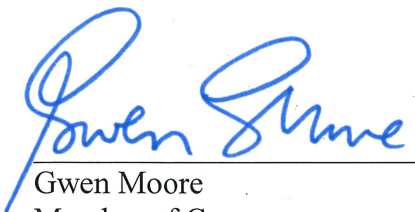
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress