

To Whom It May Concern,

I recently graduated from the University of Maryland: Baltimore County with my bachelor's degree in Gender and Women's Studies and English Literature. I was also one of the policy and research interns at NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland for the entirety of 2020, and am proud to be a part of the reproductive justice movement in Maryland. I am writing to you to share my support for **Menstrual Equity Alliance for Maryland Student House Bill 0205- Public Schools- Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products- Requirement**, because it provides all students in Maryland public schools with their basic reproductive healthcare needs, *free and size-appropriate pads and tampons*. I graduated from North County High School in 2015, and I know for a fact **House Bill 0205** would have benefitted me and my classmates.

I remember many mornings when my friends contacted me before school asking me to bring them menstrual hygiene products due to getting their period unexpectedly. My friends shouldn't have had to rely on me to bring them their period products, because if I wasn't attending school that day or if I didn't get their text message, my friends may have bled through their pants, risking peer harassment and discomfort. I also remember in both middle and elementary school the shame girls felt around their menstrual cycles and being embarrassed in asking their teachers for period products. More specifically, in middle school my friend had gotten her period in gym class, and when asking if she could go to the nurse, our gym teacher subjected her to unnecessary questioning. After telling him she had gotten her period, he said, **"you didn't have to tell me that."** All menstruators should *not* have to jump through hoops and/or feel humiliated when they need to obtain menstrual hygiene products. By providing students with pads and tampons, they will be able to avoid further shame from teachers.

Another reason why I support this bill is because it is *gender inclusive*. As an ally to transgender and gender non-binary youth, I support gender-neutral bathrooms and for menstrual hygiene products to be placed in all bathrooms since one of any gender can menstruate. Providing menstrual hygiene products in 'boy' bathrooms may help limit physical violence, bullying, and peer harassment that is enacted on many transgender youth in schools while building allyship between both transgender and cisgender students.

Finally, by providing *free and size-appropriate* menstrual hygiene products to all students in most (or even all) public school bathrooms by the year of 2025, we as a state, are saying we believe students should have their reproductive healthcare needs met. This would not only benefit their overall health and education but will fight against *period poverty*. By combatting period poverty (in which *disproportionately* impacts Black students and other students of color) with free menstrual hygiene products, we will be *increasing* student attendance, *increasing* extracurricular participation, and *decreasing* peer harassment. We will also be normalizing menstruation for educators, teachers, and non-menstruating students with my hopes of erasing the shame and stigma we have upheld as a society for far too long. For these reasons, I support **Menstrual Equity Alliance for Maryland Students House Bill 0205 – Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products- Requirement**.

I would like to thank you for considering your support for this bill and hope that you can join me in mine. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Siebenhaar
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