

## **HB0205 Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products**

Presented to the Honorable Anne Kaiser and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

January 27, 2021 1:30 p.m.

**POSITION: FAVORABLE**

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Dear Chair Anne Kaiser of the House Ways & Means Committee, and Chair Paul Pinsky of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

In 2019, 43.2% of Maryland public school students enrolled for free and reduced-price meals, indicating that their families struggled to afford basic necessities. Many students are of menstruating age. With this statistic and the state of COVID-19 exacerbating financial and racial disparities in mind, we urge you to support HB0205 to help provide free, quality menstrual products to public school students. Your support of this crucial legislation demonstrates your commitment to basic hygiene, gender equality, public health, and providing essential healthcare because menstrual health is healthcare.

A lack of access to menstrual products can significantly impact students' education, forcing them to miss class time or not participate fully due to fear of leakage. A recent New York study revealed that school attendance increased when students were provided with free menstrual hygiene products. Increased school attendance further allows female students to succeed in their academic and extracurricular goals and helps bridge gaps caused by poverty.

We are signing onto this letter because period poverty disproportionately impacts students of color from low-income families. Providing free menstrual hygiene products is a monumental step in bridging academic opportunities and reaching menstrual equity. We strongly urge you a favorable report on HB0205 and the fight for menstrual equity.

ACLU of Maryland

Margaret E. Johnson, Center on Applied Feminism - University of Baltimore

Maeve Sanford-Kelly, Maryland High School Democrats

Jessica Morgan, Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women

Maryland National Organization for Women

Jeannette Feldner, Montgomery County NOW

C.R. Valeriann, Baltimore NOW

Julia Gross, Marylanders Against Poverty

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland

Sara Carney & Ellie Frisch, Period Poverty Project

Public Justice Center

Kimberly Haven, Reproductive Justice Inside

Women's Law Center of Maryland

Shamoyia Gardiner, Strong Schools Maryland

Women's Law Center of Maryland

Lindsay M. Harris