



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

January 27, 2021

**House Bill 205
Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement**

House Ways and Means Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 205 requires public middle and high schools to provide free sanitary napkins and tampons for female students in at least two restrooms this year, and in all women's restrooms by 2025. It also requires public elementary schools to provide free menstrual hygiene products this year in at least one restroom.

Considering that 45% of Maryland students are low-income, and that feminine hygiene products are not covered by SNAP, many families cannot afford the high monthly cost of these items. Without access to feminine hygiene, girls may leave school early, stay home, skip after-school activities, or remain in class with great anxiety, hindering their education. Providing menstrual hygiene products will ensure female students are given the opportunity to participate fully in their education.

The Conference supports this bill which protects the health and safety of adolescent girls, provides them parity in educational attainment, and respects the dignity and uniqueness of the female body during the critical period of adolescence. School bathrooms provide toilet paper and soap which are essential to students' health, and feminine hygiene products should be provided as well.

This is a commonsense bill and for these reasons the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **HB 205**.