

## **HB0205 Public Schools -- Provisions of Menstrual Hygiene Products**

Presented to the Honorable Anne Kaiser and member of the House Ways and Means Committee  
January 27, 2021 1:30 p.m.

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My name is Hashmat Sherani, and I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Bill HB0205 Public Schools -- Provisions of Menstrual Hygiene Products, sponsored by Delegate Kirill Reznik.

Period poverty is a global issue that deeply impacts and limits girls and women. Female students in Maryland are not immune to this. In fact, a 2019 study revealed that 43.2% of Maryland families indicated a struggle to afford basic needs. This statistic has most likely increased in lieu of the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately impacted and continues to impact lower-income families. Because the majority racial demographics of Maryland's lower-income community are Black and Hispanic, period poverty evidently impacts young, female students of color more than their White counterparts.

As the average age of menarche continues to decline, especially in non-white communities, more female students will face period poverty. This legislation aims to bring an end to the barriers in education caused by period poverty such as skipping classes or school days because of a lack of access to menstrual hygiene products. We also hope to open the discussion on period positivity to end the stigma and taboo that surrounds menstruation by supporting menstruating students.

This legislation is more than providing menstruating students access to menstrual hygiene products. It is an encouragement for female students to recognize their bodies beyond social stigmas, and bridges gaps in academic and social barriers caused by period poverty.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable committee report on Bill HB0205. Thank you for your time and consideration.