

OFFICERS

RABBI ANDREW BUSCH
President

ELIZABETH GREEN
1st Vice President

THE HON. CHAYA FRIEDMAN

BENJAMIN ROSENBERG

RABBI STEVEN SCHWARTZ

MELANIE SHAPIRO

ROBIN WEIMAN

YEHUDA NEUBERGER
Past President

HOWARD LIBIT
Executive Director



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 205 – Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement

Ways and Means Committee – January 27, 2021

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Adat Chaim Congregation
American Jewish Committee
Americans for Peace Now
Baltimore Chapter
American Israel Public Affairs Committee
American Red Magen David for Israel
American Zionist Movement
Amit Women
Association of Reform Zionists of America
Baltimore Board of Rabbis
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Baltimore Jewish Green and Just Alliance
Baltimore Men's ORT
Baltimore Zionist District
Beth Am Congregation
Beth El Congregation
Beth Israel Congregation
Beth Shalom Congregation of
Howard County
Beth Tfiloh Congregation
B'nai B'rith, Chesapeake Bay Region
B'nai Israel Congregation
B'nai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation
Bolton Street Synagogue
Chevra Ahavas Chesed, Inc.
Chevrei Tzedek Congregation
Chizuk Amuno Congregation
Congregation Beit Tikvah
Congregation Beth Shalom of
Carroll County
Congregation Tiferes Yisroel
Federation of Jewish Women's
Organizations of Maryland
Hadassah
Har Sinai - Oheb Shalom Congregation
J Street
Jewish Federation of Howard County
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish War Veterans
Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary
Jewish Women International
Jews For Judaism
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah
Hebrew Congregation
National Council of Jewish Women
Ner Tamid Congregation
Rabbinical Council of America
Religious Zionists of America
Shaarei Tfiloh Congregation
Shomrei Emunah Congregation
Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society
Suburban Orthodox Congregation
Temple Beth Shalom
Temple Isaiah
Zionist Organization of America
Baltimore District

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 205 (HB205) would require all Maryland public schools to install and maintain menstrual product dispensers in school restrooms, making products available to students free of charge. Each middle and high school would be required to have dispensers in at least two restrooms, and in at least one for elementary schools.

Written Comments: Making mensural products readily available to students for free, would create a school environment that is better for all students. School is a place that students regularly spend eight or more hours each weekday. By not having to worry everyday about whether they have adequate menstrual products, students can focus on their education. Furthermore, students will not be forced through the trouble or embarrassment of asking for these products from a teacher or staff member. Having to do so may cause students to want to skip class, or school altogether. After New York City implemented a similar program in schools, they saw a 2.4% increase in attendance.

Access to menstrual hygiene products should no longer have to be seen as a luxury. Menstruation is a biological function like any other and we should treat it that way, by providing basic and necessary hygiene products in restrooms as we do with toilet paper, soap, and paper towels. This is especially critical for low-income students who may not otherwise have regular access to these products. Often times they are not donated to shelters or food pantries, and public assistance programs do not cover the cost of their purchase.

We believe that all students should have access to a high-quality education and a learning environment that fits their needs, HB205 would ensure that is available for more students in Maryland. We need to finally end the stigma, fear, and shame that is associated with not having adequate menstrual hygiene products. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB205.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.