

House Bill 0205 – Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement

House Hearing Ways and Means Committee- January 27, 2021

SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the Montgomery County Council of PTA's (MCCPTA) for the 2021 legislative session. MCCPTA represents over 25,000 members from over 200 school communities. MCCPTA supports HB0205 Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement. This bill will ensure that all students have free access to menstrual hygiene products at the point of use, therefore removing a barrier to attending schools by providing a basic necessity for menstruating girls.

Specifically, this bill requires each public school at the elementary, middle, and high school level, to provide menstrual hygiene products in at least one bathroom starting in 2021, and expanding to all women's restrooms at the middle and high school level by 2025. This bill also recognizes that some students that use the men's restroom might need access, so it requires one men's bathroom at the middle and high school level to provide menstrual products at each school by 2025. Montgomery County Board of Education has passed a resolution has asked MCPS to implement this policy at the middle school and high school level.

MCCPTA supports passage of HB0205 because all barriers to attending school should be eliminated when possible. Access to menstrual hygiene products increases school attendance and extracurricular participation. According to a 2018 Kotex survey, 1 of 5 low-income women report missing school or work due to lack of access to period hygiene products. The Covid-19 economy has made this issue worse, because lower income families have been disproportionately affected. We want to highlight that it is important that elementary schools are also included in this bill. 30%-50% of students start menstruating before the age of 12, and Hispanic and African American girls menstruate before their white counterparts. Therefore, this bill addresses equity issues and will help remove barriers to equitable access to education.

Therefore, **MCCPTA recommends a favorable report on House Bill 0205.**

Sincerely,

Laura Stewart

MCCPTA VP of Advocacy