

TESTIMONY OF SAM POTTER
In Support of HB 208
House Ways and Means Committee
January 30, 2020

Thank you for having me. My name is Sam Potter and I am the student body president at North Bethesda Middle School. I am here to voice my support of Bill HB208.

I'm a privileged, white, biological male. Why am I fighting for this? Because, feminism, the radical belief that all humans are created equal, and should receive the same opportunities. But, when missing class time, or out sick from toxic shock syndrome, or under financial stress, you are unable to receive those equal opportunities.

When I learned of Delegate Reznik's bill, I decided that my school wouldn't wait for the government to act so I worked with my principal and the PTSA and we are launching a project to provide menstrual products in our school with donations from our parents. Since initiating the project I have heard so many stories from my friends about the need for this bill. My friends report that they regularly miss class time, experience anxiety and spend a lot of money on menstrual products. Students in today's schools have a lot of stress, having easy, ready access to menstrual products can take away a large part of it.

HB 208 RELIEVES FINANCIAL STRESS

People with periods spend \$100-300 on menstrual products each year, a luxury that many cannot afford. In addition, most governments, including Maryland, taxes menstrual products. By providing free menstrual products for students, you can relieve financial stress for low income families.

HB 208 IMPROVES STUDENT HEALTH

You can also improve student health. Not having ready access to menstrual products, whether because of the inconvenience of sourcing products during the school day or because of financial pressures, some students use menstrual products longer than is healthy. This can cause yeast infections, bacterial infections, toxic shock syndrome, and more, which would not only damage the student but keep them out of school too.

HB 208 IMPROVES EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Putting products in schools is a small investment in the education of students who menstruate. 84% of teenagers in the USA say they have missed class time because of lack of access to menstrual products (XQ Institute). This is 10-30 minutes of missed class, and more if they're embarrassed, or unlucky. Menstrual products are a necessity, not a luxury. Schools and other public places provide toilet paper so why not other necessary hygiene products?

You're getting ready to spend billions on improving schools in Maryland. The cost of this bill is small yet its benefits would be tremendous. You can do the students of Maryland a great service by passing this bill. And I urge you to act quickly to pass this bill.