

Menstrual Equity Testimony – Madeline Hasson, Emily Kim, and Sonia Saini
HB0208 PUBLIC SCHOOLS-PROVISION OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS

Presented to the Hon. Anne Kaiser and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

January 30, 2020 1:00pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

My name is Madeline Hasson. My name is Emily Kim. And my name is Sonia Saini. We are seniors at Centennial High School in Howard County, Maryland. We strongly encourage the passage of HB0208 to ensure access to menstrual hygiene products in public school bathrooms at no cost.

I have personally missed class due to not having the necessary products to deal with my period. One time, I was sitting in a stall, waiting for one of my friends to bring me something that I could use for the rest of the day. When someone finally came, she brought a tampon, which I had never used before and I had to learn to use on the spot (and it was a way bigger than I actually needed). I ultimately ended up missing that class period and, because I wasn't accustomed to using a tampon, I was uncomfortable throughout the day.

Students who start their period unprepared may also endure unforeseen consequences. Last year, I left school during second period for a field trip with my Chinese class. I unexpectedly started my period on this trip, and was unprepared. When we returned to school, none of the other students on the trip had menstrual products with them. By that time, I had leaked through my pants. I ended up leaving school early because it was very noticeable and consequently missed my sixth period AP Microeconomics test.

Most people say the simple solution is to ask to go to the nurse. In fact, it's what my mom said when I told her I was testifying for this bill. I've tried this before, it happened the second time I'd ever got my period. I raised my hand, asked to go to the nurse, and the teacher asked me, "why?" I froze, promptly put my hand down, and decided I'd stay in my seat, nevermind that I could feel the period blood leaking and was terrified someone would notice.

These stories are not isolated incidents; they are experiences that nearly everyone who gets a period shares. As high school seniors, we would not be here to see this change, if implemented. However, as seniors, we also understand what it is like to continually be worried about your menstrual cycle, have unreliable access to menstrual hygiene products, and suffer the unfortunately associated academic consequences. As such, it is our sincere hope that in the years

to come, this is not an anxiety students will have to face. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeline Hasson: 8706 Cedar Post, Ellicott City, MD 21043
mmhasson2@gmail.com

Emily Kim: 8500 Timberland Circle, Ellicott City, MD 21043
emilyeunsungkim@gmail.com

Sonia Saini: 10212 New Forest Court, Ellicott City, MD 21042
soniasiyas3@gmail.com