



# REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE INSIDE

c/o NPCMF

1323 N. Calvert Street – Suite A

Baltimore, MD 21202

<http://www.rjinside.org>

## **HB 208 – Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products**

### **SUPPORT**

Chairman Kaiser

Members of the Ways and Means Committee

Menstruation is a normal bodily function – yet it remains a taboo subject. It is not a laughing matter, nor is it something that should make anyone feel ashamed, stigmatized, and unable to access needed products. This must change.

Reproductive Justice Inside and our coalition members and partners stand in support of HB 208. This legislation is a step in the right direction to address the issue of Period Poverty. It will also begin to frame conversations that can address the issue of stigmatization about menstruation.

We know from our work in addressing this issue for incarcerated women and girls, that access to the basic necessities that all women and girls need poses a significant barrier for many with a particular disproportionate hardship on students of color. Lack of access prohibits participation in school, programs and poses an additional stigma to these students.

Maryland can and must take action now. Other states have enacted similar legislation and we can too.

This legislation will help educate students on the natural process of menstruation and support those young students who are beginning menses in a dignified and age appropriate way. With the inclusion of an age-appropriate lesson plan, those students who have little family support and lack of information, will be able to understand with dignity the normal bodily changes their bodies are experiencing.

It will help stop the gender-based, peer harassment that we hear about all too frequently. No one should be ashamed or harassed by a normal bodily function and no one should be denied that ability to fully participate in daily activities and schooling because of lack of access to the most basic of hygiene products.

Reproductive Justice Inside stands in solidarity with the Menstrual Equity Alliance for Maryland Students and we urge your support and favorable report on HB 208.

The time for Maryland to act is now.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Haven

Coalition Coordinator