

ADVOCATES



FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To: Chair Kaiser
and members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Jamesha Caldwell, Education Policy Intern

Re: House Bill 208: Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products

Date: January 30th, 2020

Position: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 208 - Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill.

In the United States, millions of students experience period poverty; the inability to access menstrual hygiene products¹. As a result, many students with uteri are subjected to severe and oftentimes catastrophic consequences related to absenteeism, poor hygienic health, an increased risk of anxiety, and perpetual states of hypervigilance. For students with uteri, the ability to access menstrual hygiene products in schools are paramount to sustaining quality educational outcomes and experiences

In a recent study, researchers found that 4 in 5 teens in the United States have reported that they have missed multiple classes as a result of not being able to access menstrual hygiene products². For other students, to avoid disrupting their academic and social learning, they resort to unsafe and unsanitary measures including wearing pads and or supplemental toilet paper for more than four hours a day during menstrual cycles in an effort to participate in activities. By the drastic measures of school avoidance and or school engagement, **students with uteri are gravely impacted through increased short and long term health risk and educational disruption.**

HB208 ensures that schools are investing in adequate and equitable menstrual health hygiene regardless of a student's socio-economic status. Ensuring that all students have equitable access to menstrual hygiene products will significantly shift the occurrence of period poverty in education, promote safe menstrual health practices, and work to reduce the occurrence of absenteeism and anxiety among students. For the reasons above, **ACY strongly urges a favorable report on this bill.**

¹ Menstrual Equity. Thinx, 2020.

² State of the Period: The widespread impact of period poverty on US students.

Advocates for Children and Youth builds a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth can achieve their full potential.