

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB941

TO: Chair Delegate Melissa Wells, Vice Chair Delegate Kenneth Kerr, and Members of the  
Committees

FROM: Bridget Zwarich, Intern of the Young Women's Giving Circle (YWGC)

DATE: February 23, 2026

RE: Support for HB0941 - Public Health - Public Buildings - Hygiene Products

Dear Chair Delegate Melissa Wells, Vice Chair Delegate Kenneth Kerr, and Members of the  
Committees,

Good afternoon delegates, my name is Bridget Zwarich, an intern representing the Young Women's Giving Circle (YWGC), and am in favor of the HB941 bill, ensuring public restrooms in public buildings to provide an adequate supply of hygiene products. The Young Women's Giving Circle organization was established by the Women's Giving Circle over two decades ago, and has helped thousands of women. A significant driving goal of being to tackle underfunding of programs for women and girls, and to support the needs of those women and young women.

As a young girl in both Elementary and Middle school, my friends and I often shared the same anxiety about unexpectedly getting our first periods in public. This very young panic stemmed from the fear of not knowing what to do, not knowing how to handle it. Unfortunately, that dreadful experience has made many appearances when not at school and not at home, but when in or around public facilities lacking in any menstrual products. So where do we go from there? We've hoped someone else will show up and may have a product we could use. We've hoped that we chose a busy enough day to go to the park. Though we deserve more than hoping, and the growing generations of young women deserve more than just crossing their fingers in a public restroom stall. I sincerely hope future generations of young women will not need to rely

on the luck of others, and instead can have dependability in the provided basic hygiene products within the community. Just as hoping for someone to come with a product is not sufficient, my hope for future generations is not either, which is why the HB941 bill is so significant. The HB941 bill will transform hope into action, and transform panic to relief for young girls and women, such a small flip which will shape how they remember these milestones into adulthood.

On the topic of adulthood, the severity of period poverty has intensified over the past few years, seen in the two-thirds of low-income women who have reported inability to afford menstrual products within the past year, and the 35% increase in period poverty between 2018 and 2021, the span of only four years. So how are payment-wired menstrual product dispensers giving women the basic support they need in one straight-forward aspect in which they can? More specifically, in Maryland, 1 in every 8 women and girls in the twelve through mid-forties age range lives below the poverty line, forcing them to choose between food and basic hygiene, a choice no one should have to make, yet one they are living inescapably of everyday. This suffocating reality of theirs, we can shift, we can lighten for them, beginning with the passing of the HB941 bill, restoring their product accessibility simultaneously with their reassurance and hope of the community recognizing and acting on these unfair limitations. For these reasons, the Young Women's Giving Circle urges the committee to support the HB941 bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Bridget Zwarich,

First-Year Internship Holder

The Young Women's Giving Circle

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