
Planned Parenthood of Maryland

Bill: HB 208
Title: Public Schools- Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products
Committee: House Ways and Means Committee
Date: January 30, 2020
Position: Support

Planned Parenthood of Maryland supports *HB 208- Public Schools – Provision of Feminine Hygiene Products*. This bill would require county boards of education to ensure that each public school makes available menstrual hygiene products in their restrooms at no cost, which is particularly important for students in families without means.

As an established and trusted community reproductive health care provider, serving Marylanders for more than 90 years and counting, we believe that cost and access should be no barrier to students who require menstrual hygiene products.

The average menstruation lasts two to seven days and happens every 21 to 35 days. In pubescent and adolescent students, irregular menstruation is much more common than in adults, meaning even students who are prepared and have access to menstrual hygiene products could find themselves in emergency need of the products. Mayo Clinic guidelines recommend changing pads or tampons every four to eight hours. Students following these guidelines would require at least one change during the school day. Those experiencing heavy menstruation would require more. While menstruation is a normal, healthy part of human development, stigma still exists around it, especially during adolescent years. Without access to menstrual products, students will worry more about cleanliness, comfort, or stigma than their academics. What's more, inadequate access menstrual products can create risk for serious infections like bacterial growth in the vagina or toxic shock syndrome.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on HB 230. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you should have any questions, please contact Robyn Elliott, our public policy and governmental affairs consultant, at (443) 923-3443 or relliott@policypartners.net.