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WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0208 - Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products

January 30,2020

Maryland NOW believes in the ability of students to have access to education without having to suffer from anxiety or stigma due to natural biological processes, therefore we submit this written testimony today in support of HB0208, introduced by Delegate Kirill Reznik.

In 2019, approximately 43% of Maryland public school students were enrolled for free or reduced-price meals, indicating that these families are struggling to afford basic necessities, including menstrual hygiene products for the students who have achieved menses.

The lack of access to menstrual products can result in many adverse effects for students, including medical issues if products are used longer than recommended, as well as embarrassment or feelings of shame if period leaks occur during school hours. Because of this, many girls would rather miss classes than attend school if they do not have access to adequate menstrual supplies. Educational opportunities are being impacted all because students are unable to afford the supplies that they need while on their period, and students of color from low-income families are disproportionately impacted.

Without shame or fear associated with lack of menstrual hygiene supplies, Maryland students will have more opportunity to be successful in school, and be one step closer to lessening the achievement gap between students of different socioeconomic status. Maryland NOW respectfully asks you to vote yes on HB0208 and bring menstrual equity to Maryland public schools.

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