

HB0208 – Public Schools _Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products
Presented to the Hon. Anne Kaiser and Members of the House Ways & Means

January 30, 2019 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear esteemed committee members,

I am writing today to encourage you to support HB0208 in its entirety.

Like an increasing number of American girls, I got my first period in elementary school. It was a year after my first menstruation, though, on my very first day of middle school, that I experienced the embarrassment that comes from bleeding through one's pants due to lack of hygienic products. Instead of having butterflies of anticipation on the first day of school, I sat in the principal's office while the administration figured out what to do with me. When the bell rang for class change, a group of boys walked by the windowed office and loudly joked, "Joanna's already in trouble on the first day!"

Trouble.

I laughed along with the boys. I could sometimes be a troublemaker, so their assessment tracked. But, while the boys got to go to class, I sat in the principal's office missing the introduction to my second class of the day--which is, perhaps, much more troubling.

Imagine if we expected children to carry around rolls of toilet paper and hand soap with them everywhere they went. Take a second to think about what the rest of the day would look like if a student forgot both of those necessities. Imagine if that student is eleven years old and is expected to pay attention in class when they feel dirty, stigmatized, and shamed. Menstruation is an uncontrollable, natural bodily function that is inescapable for young girls, and schools must be enabled to do more to normalize the experience. This is a personal and public health issue.

Even as a mischievous eleven year old, I would have been nothing but grateful had the school provided me with the necessary hygiene products. It is my hope that by me sharing my story, along with the many other stories that I am sure you have received throughout the life of this conversation, you will fully appreciate the gravity of equalizing young girls' access to hygienic products in school.

Please support HB0208 in its entirety.

Forward,
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