



Testimony of American Association of University Women of Maryland

to the

**Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee**

in support of

Senate Bill 427: Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement

February 11, 2021

Submitted by Roxann King, Vice President for Public Policy

The American Association of University Women of Maryland supports the passage of SB 427 in agreement with Title IX and other civil rights laws related to education. "Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It covers women and men, girls and boys, and staff and students in any educational institution or program that receives federal funds." (1)

According to Johnson, M.E. (2019), menstruation is uniquely related to females' biology; schools that do not provide access to feminine hygiene products in the girls' bathrooms deny menstruating girls the educational opportunities on the basis of gender under Title IX. Feminine hygiene products provided free in schools are needed for the health, well-being, and full participation for those who menstruate. Many girls may not be able to afford feminine hygiene products and face lack of autonomy and dignity if they depend on their friends or run to the nurse who may or may not be available. The anxiety, embarrassment, and fear of exposure to taunting classmates can make it difficult for them to focus on schoolwork or even attend school at all. Feminine hygiene products are medical necessities for half of the population and free access can eliminate these repercussions.

The American Association of University Women of Maryland urges passage of SB 427 to comply with Title IX, providing menstruating girls the assurance and security of accessing free pads or tampons.

Footnotes:

- (1) 2019, March. Title IX Quick Facts. <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/03/quick-facts-title-ix-nsa.pdf> AAUW.
- (2) Johnson, M.E. et.al. 2019, March 20.2019) Title IX and Menstruation. Harvard Journal of Law and Gender. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3502638