

Menstrual Equity Testimony – Megan White, M. Ed.
Maryland SB0427: Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products
Presented to the Hon. Paul Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee
February 11, 2021 11:00am
POSITION: SUPPORT

My name is Megan White and I am a 2nd grade teacher at a Title-1 Baltimore City Elementary/Middle Public School. **I submit this testimony in support of SB0427 – Public Schools – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products**, sponsored by Senator Sarah Elfreth.

Preparing for my first year of teaching back in 2017 was a whirlwind. Before I even met my 3rd grade students, I wanted to make sure that I had everything that they might need. This included school-related supplies like pencils and notebooks, as well as hygiene-related products such as hand sanitizers and soap. Of course, professors and mentors continually warned me that there will be things that will occur during my teaching career that I cannot prepare for. Admittedly, during my first year teaching there were many moments where I was caught off-guard. One moment that still sticks with me is when one of my students came back from the bathroom with a noticeable amount of toilet paper stuffed in her leggings. I immediately assumed that she had soiled herself and I was shocked when she came up to me discreetly asking for a pad. I did not have one. I felt like a failure because while I prided myself for having a stock-pile of erasers and band-aids, I had failed to include menstrual hygiene products on my supply list.

I have to admit that I was ignorant. Until that day, I truly did not know elementary school students were able to menstruate. For me, it took one of my third grade students asking me for a pad to learn this. Thankfully, there is an abundance of research that can support my schoolhouse anecdote. There is a need for menstrual hygiene products at the elementary school level. While I have since included menstrual hygiene products in my annual back-to-school supply list, I was ecstatic to learn about the proposed SB0427. Public school students should not have to worry about bringing enough menstrual hygiene products to school on any given day. Likewise, teachers should not have to add expensive menstrual hygiene products to their ever growing list of supplies that they have to buy out of their own pocket. We do not ask students to bring their own tissues or toilet paper. When a student scrapes their knee at recess I do not ask them if they brought a band-aid from home. It is at the heart of public education to not only meet students' academic needs but also their physical ones. I wholeheartedly believe that passing SB0427 will help Maryland public schools become more equipped at meeting students' needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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