

February 23, 2021

**House Bill 757
Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement**

**House Health and Governmental Operations Committee
Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public-policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 757 requires local health departments and community action agencies to provide no-cost feminine hygiene products for women enrolled in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

Period poverty is a significant issue in our community. Considering that feminine hygiene products are not covered by SNAP or WIC, many families cannot afford the high monthly cost of these items. In one study of low-income women in the US, two-thirds could not afford menstrual hygiene products at least once last year, and 20% struggled to afford them monthly. Almost half said they had to choose between buying food and hygiene products.

The Conference supports this bill which aims to protect the health and safety of low-income women. Whether the local health department or other government agencies should deliver these products, women enrolled in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program have a demonstrated financial need and would benefit greatly from provision of these essential items.

For these reasons the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **HB 757**.