



330 N. Howard Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-576-1400
www.plannedparenthood.org/maryland

Planned Parenthood of Maryland

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 757– Local Health Departments and Community Action Agencies – Feminine Hygiene Products

Hearing Date: February 23, 2021

Position: Support

Planned Parenthood of Maryland supports *HB 757- Local Health Departments and Community Action Agencies – Feminine Hygiene Products*. This bill would require local health departments and community action agencies to provide feminine hygiene products at no cost to any woman enrolled in the Maryland Medicaid Medical Assistance Program.

As an established and trusted community reproductive health care provider, serving Marylanders for more than 90 years and counting, we believe that cost and access should be no barrier to women who require menstrual hygiene products.

A survey of low-income women in a large city found that nearly two-thirds couldn't afford menstrual hygiene products such as tampons or pads¹. Nearly half the women in this study said there were times in the past year when they could not afford to buy both food and period products. There are currently at least 42 million impoverished women in the United States, and many face indignity and shame for not being able to care for themselves during their period.² Without access to these essential products, women's movements and ambitions are tempered. Women may not feel comfortable leaving their homes, going to work, or participating in civic life when on their period. What's more, inadequate access menstrual products can create risk for serious infections like bacterial growth in the vagina or toxic shock syndrome. This bill will allow women enrolled in Medicaid, often those most in need, to access feminine hygiene products at no cost.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-menstruation-usa/even-in-the-u-s-poor-women-often-cant-afford-tampons-pads-idUSKCN1P42TX>

² <https://www.nursing.upenn.edu/live/news/1545-the-state-of-period-poverty-in-the-us>



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For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. If you should have any questions, please contact Suhani Chitalia, our public policy and governmental affairs consultant, at (240) 506-9325 or schitalia@policypartners.net.