



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: February 23, 2021

RE: HB757 Local Health Departments and Community Action
Agencies – Feminine Hygiene Products

The MLLC supports HB757 Local Health Departments and Community Action Agencies – Feminine Hygiene Products.

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB757.

Menstrual products are expensive, costly over time, and not everyone has access to them. They are a necessity to nearly half the world's population, yet inaccessible with a price tag. The average woman spends [\\$13.25 a month](#) on menstrual products—that is about \$6,360 in their reproductive lifetime (ages 12-52). This expense is even more challenging for low-income individuals and those experiencing homelessness.

A [2019 study](#) found that among low-income women, two-thirds could not afford menstrual hygiene products. Nearly half of these women said they could not purchase both food and menstrual products due to costs. About one in five women had this problem of affordability and budgeting *every month*. This is a similar experience for people who are homeless, including teenagers. It is a stressful, anxiety-inducing, and stigmatized experience to have to worry about how you are going to acquire your menstrual hygiene products month to month. Menstrual products are a basic human need and should not be luxuries.

HB757 requires a local health department to make available at no cost feminine hygiene products to any woman enrolled in Medicaid. A community action agency must also make feminine hygiene products available at no cost. Feminine hygiene products must be made available in an amount sufficient to meet the needs of the woman obtaining the products. Access to free menstrual hygiene products can offer women and girls their confidence and autonomy back.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB757.