

Testimony in Support of SB0427- Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

SB0427- Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement

February 9th, 2021

My name is Riya Seth and I am a student at River Hill High School in Clarksville, Maryland. I believe that all students in Maryland public schools deserve access to menstrual hygiene products. I'm submitting this testimony in support of SB0427, introduced by Senator Elfreth.

Personally, I've forgotten sanitary products at home, which has resulted in anxiety and has distracted me from participating in school. As I shared the details of this bill with my peers, many shared stories similar to mine. They also voiced their stories about the impact of period stigma- many felt embarrassed to ask others for menstrual products. By providing access to period products in bathrooms, we can begin to destigmatize the basic bodily functions of menstruation.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated underlying inequalities and public health disparities. Namely, period poverty, the lack of access to menstrual products due to income inequality, has been worsened. Even before the pandemic, more than 40% of the nearly 200,000 girls of menstruating age came from families facing financial difficulties. Similar to toilet paper, menstrual products are basic hygiene requirements.

In order to combat the issues of shame and stigma associated with menstruation and bridge the gaps in income inequality, we must provide period products in public schools and pass SB0427.

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