

HB 87 - Maryland Food Bank - SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Wallerstedt

Position: FAV

House Bill 87

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products **House Appropriations Committee** **January 24, 2023**

SUPPORT

House Bill 87 requires the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver allowing for diapers and menstrual hygiene products to be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, should such a waiver be made available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of facing food insecurity. Food insecurity means a lack of consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day. Some communities and populations are at a higher risk of food insecurity, including families with children. There are food insecure Marylanders in every corner of the state.

Marylanders and their families are being financially squeezed by an affordability crisis for basic household necessities, including food. 30% of Maryland households are currently reporting difficulties affording their usual household expenses, and a troubling 93% of Maryland adults are struggling to cope with all of these price increases. Coupled with the ending of pandemic-era Emergency Allotments, which maxed out SNAP benefits based on household size, Maryland families are truly struggling to get by day-by-day. The Maryland Food Bank does not anticipate this will meaningfully change in the near future, especially for food insecure Marylanders who rely on food assistance benefits such as SNAP to feed themselves and their families.

Any public financial assistance that can be used to ease the burden of rising costs for any household essentials including diapers and menstrual hygiene products should be sought by the state. HB 87 will directly help struggling Maryland families purchase household necessities that are currently left out of assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC. Having to prioritize what to buy for your family is an impossible decision, yet one that too many Marylanders have to make every day. HB 87 is a simple and cost-effective way for the state to help alleviate this burden.

For these reasons, the Maryland Food Bank respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 87.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_HB0087.pdf

Uploaded by: Brian Barnwell

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 24, 2023

HB0087

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual
Hygiene Products
House Appropriations Committee**

Position: Favorable

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

House Bill 0087 requires the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products, if the U.S. Department of Agriculture makes the waiver available.

HB 0087 will require the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infant, and Children to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products, if the United States Department of Agriculture makes the waiver available. This bill is vital to parents who cannot afford the rising cost of diapers or menstrual hygiene products. In the State of Maryland, one-quarter of babies and toddlers live in low-income families. Diapers are expensive, costing the average family over \$80 per month, and for single parent households, infant care costs approximately 40% of household income. Currently, diapers and feminine hygiene products are not covered by SNAP or WIC, leaving many families unable to afford these essential items out of pocket. We must help those in need any way we can, and this bill goes directly to accomplishing this goal.

The Catholic Conference works to support efforts that are life-affirming. If implemented, this bill will greatly help those families in need. No mom or dad should ever have to worry about having a diaper for their baby or toddler. This bill will help protect the health and safety of families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 0087**.
Thank you for your consideration.

HB87 Hygiene Products.pdf

Uploaded by: Essita Duncan

Position: FAV



www.marylandwomen.org

Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

51 Monroe Street, Ste. 1034 – Rockville, Maryland 20850

240-306-5718

www.marylandwomen.org

January 20, 2023

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair

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Yun Jung Yang, Esq.

*Judith Vaughan-Prather
Executive Director*

*Tammy Wise
Management Associate*

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
The Honorable Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Re: HB0087 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

Dear Del. Barnes, Del. Chang and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) urges your support of HB0087 which will allow recipients of Maryland's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children to use benefits to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products.

The MCW was established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women's accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission writes to you today.

Low-income women and girls of all ages struggle to afford menstrual hygiene products and diapers. Currently, neither the Maryland Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program nor the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children allow their benefits to be used for the purchase of feminine hygiene products or diapers. While Maryland already exempts menstrual feminine hygiene products and diapers from sales tax, adopting House Bill 0087 is the next step to ensuring these essential items are affordable to all Maryland's women and girls.

House Bill 0087 will require Maryland's Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products.

We strongly urge your support of HB0087.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tawanda A. Bailey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Maryland Commission for Women

(The positions expressed in this letter are those of the Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.)

HB87 Hygiene Products.pdf

Uploaded by: Essita Duncan

Position: FAV



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Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Maryland Commission for Women

(The positions expressed in this letter are those of the Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.)

2023 ACNM HB 87 House Side FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jan Kriebs

Position: FAV



Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Bill Number: HB 87

Title: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

Hearing Date: January 24, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports *House Bill 87 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products*. The bill will require the state Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products, if the U.S. Department of Agriculture makes the waiver available. Unlike food, diapers and menstrual hygiene products are not covered by WIC or SNAP.

Children require at least 50 diaper changes per week, or 200 diaper changes per month. Some families with limited resources cannot afford enough diapers, and this situation can put the health of their infants at risk. Dirty diapers can lead to transmission of hepatitis A, viral meningitis, and severe bacterial diarrheas, among many other illnesses that are a danger to the baby's health and the family's health.¹

1

http://www.idahodiaperbank.org/why_diapers_/impacts_of_diaper_need/#:~:text=When%20there%20is%20not%20an,baby's%20health%20and%20the%20family's.

People who menstruate have similarly severe potential health consequences. Not having proper menstrual hygiene management increases a person's chances of contracting urinary tract infections, yeast infections, and toxic shock syndrome which can cause vomiting, seizures, and death.

Maryland should make it a priority to ensure families have the resources to keep their families healthy. We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

WDC Testimony 2023_HB87_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: JoAnne Koravos

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

House Bill 87 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products
Appropriations Committee – January 24, 2023
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0087. We need to address *diaper need* and *period poverty* in the state of Maryland. Existing social programs do not adequately address the diaper and menstrual product needs of mothers/caregivers and menstruating women. This bill proposes a commonsense solution to this persistent problem by requiring Maryland Department of Human Services to apply for any waiver made available by the USDA to allow SNAP and/or WIC recipients to use their benefits for menstrual products and diapers. More importantly, if the waiver is granted, the bill requires DHS to be responsible for implementation.

Period Poverty. Period poverty is the lack of access to affordable menstrual products. When we think of poverty, food insecurity and homelessness are at the top of mind. However, for women and girls, inability to afford hygienic menstrual products is a reality and impacts other aspects of their lives. They are often embarrassed, and in some cultures ashamed, to discuss their menstrual cycles. Lack of access to menstrual products can impact a girl's education, largely due to poverty, but stigma is also a factor. When a girl misses school because of her period, we are not prioritizing her education. When a working mother misses work because she can't afford her menstrual products, this compounds the poverty and ultimately the needs of her family.¹ According to the Maryland State Fact Sheet on Period Poverty, there are 1,297,986 women and girls between the ages 12 to 44 in the state. Of those, 1 in 8 lives below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Diaper Need. Diaper need is the lack of a sufficient supply of diapers to keep an infant or child clean, dry, and healthy. According to the National Diaper Bank Network, babies without clean diapers are exposed to more potential health risks & less likely accepted to daycares, leaving parents unable to attend work. According to the National Diaper Bank Network one in three families struggles to provide clean diapers for their baby. Furthermore, diapers are essential to the well-being of Maryland families. In Maryland, 72% of mothers with infants are in the workforce and most daycare facilities require parents to provide diapers for their child. In Maryland 16% of children under age 18 are infants and toddlers and 12% of those live in families earning less than 100% of FPL.

We ask for your support for HB0087 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

JoAnne Koravos
WDC Vice President Advocacy

¹ [Period Poverty. The Belittling of a Basic Need](https://ppoverty.org/period-poverty-the-belittling-of-a-basic-need/?gclid=Cj0KCQjAilSeBhCCARIsAHnAzT_V9v1-Gdffbw80FMEnGYpZmYtENbADgT2QpdQEAdFyWkuXcwQysVkaAjzdEALw_wcB) (October 20, 2022). https://ppoverty.org/period-poverty-the-belittling-of-a-basic-need/?gclid=Cj0KCQjAilSeBhCCARIsAHnAzT_V9v1-Gdffbw80FMEnGYpZmYtENbADgT2QpdQEAdFyWkuXcwQysVkaAjzdEALw_wcB

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB0087.pdf

Uploaded by: Joshua Greenberg

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

JOSHUA M. GREENBERG
Associate Director of Government Affairs

BILL NO.: **HB 87**

TITLE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver –
Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

SPONSOR: Delegate Stewart

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: January 19, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 87 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products. This legislation requires the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under certain programs to be used to purchase diapers and menstrual products.

Inflation has only added to the costs borne by low-income Maryland residents who already struggle to make their paychecks cover their own personal expenses. Individuals who require menstrual hygiene/childcare products feel these effects more acutely, as their standard cost of living remains higher and has increased sharply due to the inflationary effects of the pandemic. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides financial benefits to low-income residents who cannot cover their basic needs, however, essential healthcare items are excluded from list of products that benefits may be used for.

House bill 87 would require the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the SNAP and WIC programs to be used to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products. This would assist low-income residents throughout the State of Maryland in affording the critical healthcare products they need.. HB 87 is more important than ever as the State continues to recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and help low-income residents get back on their feet.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 87. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB 87_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV

Allowing diapers and menstrual products to be purchased through SNAP and WIC would provide relief to struggling Marylanders

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 87

Given before the House Appropriations Committee

In a time of high inflation and economic uncertainty, allowing Marylanders to use their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products would have a lasting impact on the lives of many struggling Marylanders. This would provide economic relief for low-income Marylanders struggling to keep up with rising inflation and the already high cost of essentials such as diapers and menstrual products. For these reasons, **the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 87.**

Even with the help of safety net programs like SNAP and WIC, too many Marylanders struggle to afford basic needs. Period poverty, a term used to describe a person's inability to afford or access menstrual products to be healthy, increased by 35% between 2018 and 2021 according to a study by U by Kotex®.ⁱ Two in five people in the U.S. struggled to purchase menstrual products due to a lack of income, and many report that the COVID-19 pandemic made it harder to access such products. In turn, this struggle can disrupt a person's life such that they have to be absent from school or work, and can also impact their physical, mental and emotional health.ⁱⁱ Although Maryland does not impose a tax on period supplies, SNAP and WIC recipients already demonstrate financial need due to their low-income status and would greatly benefit from expanding the type of products they can purchase with their existing benefits.

In addition to their continuous use, diapers also pose a substantial expense for families. Nationwide and on average, parents spend \$100 a month on diapers per child.ⁱⁱⁱ Diaper need, or the struggle to afford sufficient diapers for children to be clean and healthy, poses significant issues for parents:

- Parents are often expected to provide diapers to their childcare providers, leading some of them to stay at home with their child due to their inability to provide them.
- Families may ration diapers and delay diaper changes, resulting in rashes or urinary tract infections for children among other physical concerns.
- Parents are forced to choose between basic necessities and may forego spending their income on essentials for themselves to be able to provide diapers for their children .

Although some mothers report accessing diapers through shelters and community resources such as diaper banks to supplement their purchases, they should be able to have a reliable source of supply.^{iv} It is especially important that parents have the support to provide stability for their children given that 15.2% of Maryland children under the age of five lived below the poverty level in 2021 (\$26,500 for a family of four).^v Research also shows that ensuring families have an adequate supply of diapers helps children sleep better and thus helps produce favorable developmental outcomes.^{vi}

It does not help that the prices of both diapers and menstrual hygiene products has risen. Reports show that the cost of diapers have increased by 22% since 2018,^{vii} and some menstrual products were up by 10% as of mid-year 2022.^{viii} While these numbers can be attributed, in part, to supply-chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of rapidly rising material goods is showing no signs of dissipating. Allowing SNAP and WIC recipients to purchase basic essentials such as diapers and menstrual products through their benefits is necessary to account for these rapid changes, so that Marylanders can live and meet their bio-psycho-social needs.

House Bill 87 is an important step in helping more low-income families afford necessary products. If the U.S. Department of Agriculture approves the waiver for SNAP and WIC recipients to purchase diapers and menstrual products, the Maryland Department of Human Services should apply for such waiver that will create more economic security for these families in need.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Appropriations Committee give a favorable report to House Bill 87.

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 87

Bill summary

House Bill 87 requires the Maryland Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver that, if approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will allow Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) recipients to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products with their benefits.

Background

Diapers and menstrual hygiene products are deemed as nonessential yet this is far from the truth. The reality is that both diaper and period products are needed frequently by millions of families with young children and people who menstruate. This constant need for such supplies places a financial burden on low-income families who often have to carefully budget to meet their basic necessities, and even then, some families are unable to afford or access these products. With the rising cost of living and inflation driving the increase of prices for material goods, it is likely that many families will continue to struggle in the foreseeable future.

The inability to afford diapers for children or to access menstrual products pose significant alterations in the lives of many individuals and families. From threatening job security to impacting physical health, diaper need and period poverty should be strongly taken into consideration as a problem that needs to be solved with quick and

smart policy changes. Applying for the waiver that might enable SNAP and WIC recipients to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products would greatly benefit Marylanders.

Equity Implications

Policies in the past have led to a system of unequal opportunities for marginalized groups within Maryland. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have long been overturned or mitigated, the impact of these policies continue to persist in both society and public policy and have led to significant racial and health disparities. People of color experience much higher rates of economic insecurity and poverty and are more likely to use SNAP and WIC or other economic relief programs to afford basic necessities. In particular, single-parent households, women, and children of color are overrepresented among families living in poverty. Period poverty and diaper need are also disproportionately experienced by Black and Latinx people.

Research shows that increasing economic security for households through programs like SNAP and WIC can help reduce overall poverty, child poverty, and racial and ethnic inequities. Authorizing families to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products through their SNAP and WIC benefits will enable this program to better meet participants' needs. Ensuring people can meet their basic needs strengthens our economy and can dismantle the economic barriers that too often hold back Marylanders of color.

Impact

House Bill 87 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

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- ⁱ “New Study by U by Kotex® shows 35% Increase in Period Poverty Since 2018,” <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-study-by-u-by-kotex-shows-35-increase-in-period-poverty-since-2018-301297210.html>
- ⁱⁱ “End Diaper Need and Period Poverty: Families Need Cash Assistance to Meet Basic Needs,” <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/end-diaper-need-and-period-poverty-families-need-cash-assistance-to>
- ⁱⁱⁱ “Diaper Dilemma: Low Income Families Face High Costs and Limited Supplies of an Essential Good,” Institute for Research on Poverty, 2022, <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/diaper-dilemma-low-income-families-face-high-costs-and-limited-supplies-of-an-essential-good/>
- ^{iv} Marti-Castaner, M., Pavlenko, T., Engel, R., Sanchez, K., Crawford A.E., Brroks-Gunn, J., & Wimer, C. (2022). Poverty after birth: How mothers experience and navigate U.S. safety net programs to address family needs. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31, 2248–2265. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1007/s10826-022-02322-0>
- ^v Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey data 1-year estimates from 2021
- ^{vi} Shaffer, E., Porter, S., Condon, E., Zha, P., & Caldwell, B.A. (2022). Associations between diaper need and child sleep in under-resourced families. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 43 (7), 402-408. doi:10.1097/DBP.0000000000001088
- ^{vii} “Diaper Dilemma: Low Income Families Face High Costs and Limited Supplies of an Essential Good,” Institute for Research on Poverty, 2022, <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/diaper-dilemma-low-income-families-face-high-costs-and-limited-supplies-of-an-essential-good/>
- ^{viii} “It’s getting more expensive to have your period, thanks to inflation,” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-09/inflation-is-pushing-tampon-prices-up-10>

Community Action Board Testimony_HB87_Jan 24 2023

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



**Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony in Support of HB0087
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products
January 24, 2023**

TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair; The Honorable Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair; and Members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County’s federally designated anti-poverty group, strongly supports HB87 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill, which would require the state to apply for a waiver from the Department of Agriculture, if given the opportunity, that would allow SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase diapers and feminine hygiene products, addresses an ongoing and sometimes overlooked need. Access to these necessary products, which are not covered by any other public benefits programs, remains a challenge for too many of our neighbors. These products can be very expensive and place a tremendous burden on lower-income households. Historically, our board, along with the Maryland Community Action Partnership, has recognized the importance of access to these products.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

- Families may keep diapers on for too long or empty solids and reuse disposable diapers, resulting in rashes, urinary tract infections, or worse.
- Diapers, which cost nearly \$100 per month per child, can be a serious burden for parents with low earnings and those who are out of work or unable to work.
- Many child care providers require parents to provide diapers each day. At one diaper bank, 56% of parents who needed child care to go to work reported missing work because they lacked diapers.¹

Similarly, many women face challenges paying for feminine hygiene products, something referred to as “period poverty”. A survey of 2,000 women (aged 18–55) found that 49% have faced a lack of access to sanitary products, menstrual hygiene education, toilets, hand washing facilities and/or waste management. Sixty percent of respondents admitted to budgeting in order to afford sanitary items and 79% made sacrifices or gone with less in order to afford their necessities.²

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/end-diaper-need-and-period-poverty-families-need-cash-assistance-to>

² <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

This bill takes a step in the right direction towards addressing these unmet needs. We strongly encourage the Committee to support HB87.

WA- HB 87- SNAPWIC Waiver - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Klingenmaier

Position: FAV



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432
Phone: 410.261.5874 • Fax: 410.889.0203

House Bill 87 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

House Appropriations Committee
January 24, 2023

Support

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate about and advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates supports HB 87, which requires the Department of Human Services to apply for a federal waiver that allows Marylanders who receive the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) to use their benefits to purchase diapers and menstrual products.

Diapers and menstrual products are a necessary expense for families, and are a substantial cost burden for low-income families. The average cost of an adequate supply of diapers is \$75-\$100 per month, per child.¹ Children need a sufficient supply of diapers to be dry, clean and healthy, and without that, children are more susceptible to infections, rashes, and illnesses.² According to the National Diaper Bank Network, diapers banks across the United States have seen a sharp rise in demand, with some diaper banks seeing a 500% increase in people seeking diapers.³ Menstrual products are another necessary expense for families, and the cost of products are unattainable for many low-income households. On average, families can spend anywhere between \$5 and \$10 for a box of tampons and pads, or significantly more for durable products like menstrual cups. Given that menstruating individuals have approximately 12-13 menstrual cycles a year, the cost of menstrual products quickly adds up in a tight budget.

Diaper and menstrual product need disproportionately harms low-income women and families of color. Diaper need makes it difficult for women to re-enter the workforce, as child care providers require parents to bring with them an adequate supply of diapers. Consequently, diaper need has been identified as a reason that parents may not attend work or school.⁴ Moreover, a body of research demonstrates that –due to the stresses of living in poverty– low-income children often start puberty earlier than their peers, and students of color menstruate earlier than their white peers.⁵ Tragically, many low-income individuals use menstrual products for excessive periods of time to stretch their supply, increasing risk for deadly conditions like toxic shock syndrome.

Building flexibility in SNAP and WIC to purchase diapers and menstrual products will increase the health, safety, and security of low-income families. Diapers and menstrual products are rarely available at shelters and food banks, so allowing families to purchase diapers and menstrual products with SNAP and WIC increases a family's self-determination to leverage the resources they have to meet their needs.

WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 87.

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, *Chair of Welfare Advocates*

¹ Diaper Need and Its Impact on US Families. 2019. <https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Diaper-Need-and-Its-Impact-on-US-Families.pdf>

² Diaper Need. 2019.

³ CBS News. 2021. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/diaper-prices-going-up-pandemic/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Psychological Bulletin. (2004). *Timing of Pubertal Maturation in Girls: An Integrated Life Approach.* <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-20177-005>

HB 87 - WLCMD - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Siri

Position: FAV

BILL NO: House Bill 87
TITLE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products
COMMITTEE: Appropriations
HEARING DATE: January 24, 2023f
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Assuming the U.S. Department of Agriculture makes a waiver available, House Bill 87 would require the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women Infants, and Children (WIC) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual products. The purpose of the SNAP and WIC programs are to increase health outcomes for low-income women and families in Maryland. While diapers and menstrual products are not explicitly related to nutrition, they are both necessities and lack of access to such products is linked to negative health consequences. The Women's Law Center supports House Bill 87 because it would assist women who are already often the primary care takers and increasingly the sole or primary income-earner for families secure the products they need to ensure their health and the health of their families.

Decreasing barriers to access for diapers is based in sound economic and gender fairness policy. Without diapers, infants cannot participate in childcare and early childhood development programs. When children cannot participate in those programs, oftentimes caregivers cannot work but rather must stay home with their children, continuing the cycle of poverty and underemployment. As many as 1 in 3 mothers report difficulties in affording basic necessities for their infants, including diapers. By supporting access to diapers, we support working women and their ability to support their families.

Similarly, providing women with feminine hygiene products is a matter of simple human dignity. They are not a luxury, nor should they be treated as such. Recent studies show that when left without access to period products, homeless women and girls often have to improvise, steal tampons, ask strangers for help, substitute paper towels for pads, and even use T-shirts as makeshift rags. These coping practices lead to poor menstrual hygiene. Poor menstrual health and practices, research shows, can lead to serious infections like bacterial growth in the vagina or toxic shock syndrome. Lack of access to menstrual products can also lead to people missing school or work. A 2019 report in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology found that two-thirds of women living in poverty could not afford such products the previous year and one-fifth could not afford them on a monthly basis. According to a 2019 national survey, two-thirds of teens feel stressed about inadequate access to menstrual hygiene products, 1 in 5 teens have struggled to afford products, and 84% of students have missed class or skipped school due to lack of access to these products.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. urges a favorable report on House Bill 87.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.

HB0087-APP-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB0087

January 24, 2023

TO: Members of the Appropriation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 87 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

POSITION: Support

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 87.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture may make available to States a waiver extending Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) benefits to cover diapers and period products. HB87 would allow Maryland to apply for this waiver as soon as it becomes available.

At \$100+/month for diapers and \$20/month for menstrual products, many Baltimore City families—disproportionately those who are Black and Latino—do not have the cash flow to secure the amount of diapers and menstrual products needed to stay clean and healthy. Having to choose between health-related necessities each month is a public health crisis with devastating effects on youth and families. For example, research shows that 4 in 5 teens missed class because they lacked access to period products;ⁱ more than half of parents surveyed at a diaper bank missed work because their baby's daycare required them to send in diapers, which they couldn't afford.ⁱⁱ Thus contributing to ongoing health, educational, and economic disparities based on sex and race.

SNAP is a lifeline for many Baltimore City residents, who comprise one quarter of all households receiving SNAP benefits in Maryland.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, public and private resources for diapers and menstrual products pale in comparison to food assistance options. This legislation would permit SNAP recipients to allot their benefits to best fit their family's basic material needs each month.

Allowing Maryland to apply for a federal waiver to extend SNAP benefits to diapers and period products may help alleviate our public health crisis; lessen health and economic disparities based on gender and race; and, increase dignity and reduce stress among our citizens. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB87.

ⁱ State of the Period: The widespread impact of period poverty on US students. https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf

ⁱⁱ End Diaper Need and Period Poverty: Families Need Cash Assistance to Meet Basic Needs. <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/9-27-21tanf.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Maryland SNAP Households, 2021. (Mar 2022). <https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/familywelfare/>

HB0087_FAV_MedChi, MDAAP, MACHC, MDACOG_SNAP - Wai

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: FAV



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



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TO: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
Members, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Vaughn Stewart

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Andrew G. Vetter
Christine K. Krone
410-244-7000

DATE: January 24, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 87 – *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Maryland Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 87.

House Bill 87 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to apply for a waiver, if made available, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Assistance Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) to use benefits from those programs to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products. If a waiver is approved, DHS is required to adopt regulations to implement the waiver.

SNAP and WIC are two critical federal social services programs, which provide essential food and nutritional assistance to low-income individuals. Diapers and menstrual hygiene products are essential to the health of women and children. However, low-income individuals are often unable to afford these products, thereby unnecessarily placing these women and children at risk. Passage of House Bill 87 would enable the State to lawfully provide Maryland's most disadvantaged individuals access to these products through the use of benefits that were originally created to address the very real challenges these individuals face in securing access to food and nutritional products as well as other critical health and hygiene products. A favorable report is requested.

HB0087_DHS_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge

Position: FAV

Date: January 24, 2023

Bill number: HB0087

Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Bill title: **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support for House Bill 87 (HB 87).

House Bill 87 would require DHS to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products should such a waiver be made available by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

DHS estimates that more than 45,000 Maryland SNAP recipients would be eligible to make use of such an expansion of the usage of their SNAP benefits. This expansion would widen the benefits support to include essential items for eligible infants and women.

The Department would like to note for the Committee that at this time such use of SNAP funds is not permitted under 7 C.F.R § 271.2 (2023). Should changes to federal law be made and a waiver or other regulations surrounding the usage of SNAP funds make clear to DHS that Maryland recipients of SNAP could purchase diapers and/or menstrual hygiene products with their SNAP benefits, the Department would apply for the waiver and adopt any necessary state regulations for implementation.

The Department is grateful to offer our support for HB 87 and requests a favorable report.



HB 87 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs -

Uploaded by: Robin McKinney

Position: FAV



HB 87- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products
House Appropriations Committee
January 24, 2023
SUPPORT

Chairman Barnes, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 87. This bill will allow the state to remove financial barriers in purchasing diapers and menstrual hygiene products if the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes the waiver available.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate-income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

According to the USDA, families spend around \$12,000 on basic necessities for babies within one year¹. This price tag is burdensome for low-income families and jeopardizes their economic well-being. When families cannot afford to buy the proper number of diapers for their babies, they will have to sacrifice other necessities or stretch the number of diapers they use. Both options can lead to negative health outcomes for babies, like urinary tract infections (UTI's) or diaper rashes.

The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) defines Period Poverty as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education, including but not limited to sanitary products, washing facilities, and waste management.² **HB 87 would help ensure that our state is prepared to combat Period Poverty by decreasing the burden of purchasing menstrual hygiene products whenever a wavier becomes available.** When people do not have access to menstrual hygiene products it can lead to the overuse of those products. The over-use of pads and tampons can lead to the deadly toxic shock syndrome (TSS) or cause other negative health outcomes.

At this time, there is not a federal waiver available to states. However, HB 87 prepares Maryland to quickly apply for the economic relief offered by the federal government. This is preparation is essential as inflation continues to increase the price of everyday necessities and experts predict a prolonged economic downturn. If the USDA decides to lessen the financial burden on low income families through a wavier for diapers and menstrual hygiene products, Maryland will be prepared to take advantage of that opportunity.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 87.

¹ USDA- [The Cost of Raising a Child](#)

² AMWA- [Period Poverty](#)

2023 MCHS HB 87 House Side FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 87 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

Hearing Date: January 24, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) strongly supports *House Bill 87 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products*. The bill requires the state Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products, if the U.S. Department of Agriculture makes the waiver available.

Our network of federally-qualified health centers focuses on providing care to underserved communities. Neither diapers nor menstrual hygiene products are covered by SNAP or WIC. Since many of our patients have limited resources, they often face financial difficulties in purchasing these products, yet a sufficient supply of sanitary products is necessary to protect children and menstruating people from physical harm. Dirty diapers can harbor germs such as salmonella, listeria, norovirus, and E. coli, and unsanitary menstrual hygiene products can cause infections such as bacterial vaginosis and yeast infections.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

HB 87 FAV Del Stewart.pdf

Uploaded by: Vaughn Stewart

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB87

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart
January 24th, 2023 • Appropriations Committee

What the Bill Does:

HB87 is a step towards allowing recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to use their benefits to purchase diapers and menstrual products. SNAP gives families a monthly dollar amount on a preloaded Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to purchase food. WIC does not provide a dollar amount for food items, but rather offers nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and nutritious food based on a recipient's situation. Both SNAP and WIC are administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

HB87 instructs the state agencies with oversight of SNAP and WIC (the Maryland Department of Human Services and the Maryland Department of Health, respectively) to apply for any waiver that would allow for these benefits to be used for the purchasing of diapers and menstrual products. At the moment, no such waiver exists. Once USDA makes one available, these departments must apply for the waiver. Once granted, the state agencies would be required to implement the changes.

Why the Bill is Important:

Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world menstruate. However, one in four women in the U.S. struggled to purchase period products in 2018.¹ In 2021, Black and Hispanic people who

1

https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/uploads/filer_public/d3/d3/d3d3914a-d23c-4819-a69a-bc437aca922a/2020_period_poverty_fact_sheet.pdf

menstruate were more likely to agree they struggled to afford period products (35% and 36%, respectively vs. 23% of White respondents).² People who struggle to afford the menstrual products they need may resort to dangerous and unsanitary options, like wearing a pad or tampon for more than four hours, which puts them at greater risk of infections like toxic shock syndrome. People might also resort to substitute products, like toilet paper or socks, if they are not able to afford the safer products.

Low-income parents often struggle to afford diapers for their children; nearly three in ten low-income parents reported that they could not afford diapers.³ With diapers costing nearly \$100 per month per child, this can be a serious burden for low-income parents or parents who are unable to work. A study by Yale University concluded that families with an adequate supply of diapers experience less parenting stress than families without an adequate supply.

Expanding what can be purchased using SNAP and WIC benefits would alleviate some of the financial burden associated with buying these products. The only current SNAP or WIC benefit packages that exist for personal care items are reserved for pregnant and breastfeeding women, which only cover infant formula and related food items. Access to diapers and menstrual hygiene products will help low-income Marylanders and their children stay clean, healthy, and comfortable. In addition, fewer individuals will have to miss work or school because they don't have access to the products they need. This bill will give individuals more financial freedom to purchase the goods they need without having to worry how it will affect their income. **These hygiene products are not optional. They are necessary for personal care and quality of life.**

Why the Committee Should Vote Favorably:

SNAP and WIC recipients are some of the most vulnerable Marylanders, and those with periods or children bear an added financial burden. Illinois passed identical legislation in 2021, which went into effect in 2022. To date, they have not been granted a USDA waiver, but we're hopeful that as more states pass similar legislation, the federal government will feel more compelled to oblige.

²

https://cdn.b12.io/client_media/HJ1wIVtI/1d8564dc-bf10-11eb-9c7a-0242ac110002-U_by_Kotex_Period_Poverty_-_PPAW_Data_Se_t.pdf

³

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/end-diaper-need-and-period-poverty-families-need-cash-assistance-to#:~:text=A%20study%20conducted%20by%20Yale.with%20low%20incomes%20in%20St.>

Marylanders who rely on SNAP and WIC should be able to use their benefits to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products. I urge a favorable report.

1 - HB 87 - APP - MDH - LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: INFO



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 24, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 87 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products - Letter of Information

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 87 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs - Waiver - Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products. HB 87 would require the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) to apply for a waiver to allow benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to be used to purchase diapers or menstrual hygiene products, if the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes the waiver available.

WIC funds, as currently authorized by the USDA, are intended to provide supplemental foods and nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support. Currently, the purchase of diapers and menstrual hygiene products using WIC funds are not authorized by the USDA. We note that diapers and baby products were exempted from Maryland sales tax last year. Authorized food products can be purchased via electronic benefit cards redeemed at retail stores. To implement any future waiver, we would need additional USDA guidance.

MDH would be happy to partner with DHS in the future to take advantage of any policy changes to benefit Marylanders served by the WIC program. We are open to continuing conversations about this bill with the bill sponsor.

If you would like further information please contact Megan Peters, Acting Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, at 410-260-3190 or megan.peters@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary