



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](#)