



**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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> <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.