



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 25, 2026

House Bill 457
Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products -
Requirement
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 457 requires each institution of higher education that provides on-campus housing to provide, free of charge, menstrual hygiene products in student health centers at the institution.

Providing menstrual hygiene products for women is an important way to promote health equity, dignity, and public health. Research shows that lack of access to pads and tampons contributes to what is called “period poverty”—a situation where individuals cannot afford or obtain these essential products—leading to health risks such as urinary tract infections and missed school or work days.¹ Period poverty affects millions, including youth and low-income women, and can disrupt education and daily life when products are unavailable.

Placing products in student health centers for women to have as a resource acknowledges that menstruation is a natural biological process experienced by women and affirms their needs in the spaces they use most. Studies and surveys also show strong public support for making products available because having them prevents embarrassment, reduces shame and stigma, and helps individuals participate fully in school, work, and community life without interruption.² Clear signage and education on proper use and disposal should also accompany product

¹ https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases-from-aap-conferences/period-poverty-research-finds-1-in-3-teens-lack-access-to-menstruation-products/?utm_source

² chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://allianceforperiodsupplies.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Executive-Summary-U.S.-Attitudes-Towards-the-Availability-of-Menstrual-Supplies-in-Public-Schools-and-Public-Universities.pdf?utm_source

availability, recognizing that many women may lack menstrual health education regardless of age.

By focusing the legislation on student health centers and not all restrooms on campus, this policy supports women's health, respects the natural distinctions in biological sex, and affirms the dignity of women as they manage a normal bodily function with privacy and respect.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 457**.

Thank you for your consideration.