

## **HB 457**

Uploaded by: Beatrix Peck

Position: FAV



**Support**

**Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**  
***HB 457 (Feldmark)***  
***Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement***  
***(Crossover)***

**Matt Power, President**  
[mpower@micua.org](mailto:mpower@micua.org)  
**March 25, 2026**

On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the more than 56,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support with amendments regarding [\*\*HB 457 \(Feldmark\) Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement\*\*](#). This bill would require institutions of higher education to provide menstrual hygiene products in student health centers of institutions with on-campus housing.

MICUA supports HB 457 as amended by the House Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of our institutions regarding House Bill 457. If you have any questions, please contact Irnande Altema, Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, [ialtema@micua.org](mailto:ialtema@micua.org).

# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_HB457\_SenateCross**

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> Clear signage and education on proper use and disposal should also accompany product

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<sup>1</sup> [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](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)

<sup>2</sup> [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](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.

**XHB0457\_MACC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Drew Jabin

Position: FAV

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

March 25, 2026

**HB 457 – Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement****Position: Favorable as Amended**

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The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 457** as amended. MACC appreciates the sponsor's leadership and shares the goal of ensuring students have reliable access to essential health and hygiene resources while on campus. Maryland's community colleges are deeply committed to student well-being and recognize that access to menstrual hygiene products can remove barriers that may otherwise interfere with a student's ability to fully participate in their education.

MACC appreciates the thoughtful, collaborative engagement with the sponsor and the Committee to refine this proposal. As amended, the bill reflects a more targeted and workable approach by focusing on institutions that provide on-campus housing and requiring access to menstrual hygiene products in student health centers. This approach ensures that students have reliable access to these essential products while recognizing the operational and fiscal realities facing institutions. While only a tiny subset of Maryland's community colleges operate on-campus housing, those institutions understand that this requirement would apply to them and are committed to complying with the bill as amended.

The amendments also provide institutions with a reasonable implementation timeline, allowing community colleges to plan and allocate resources appropriately. This flexibility is critical for institutions that operate across multiple campuses and facilities and must balance student support services with constrained budgets. Maryland's community colleges remain committed to supporting student success and well-being and appreciate the sponsor's partnership in advancing a policy that is both meaningful and implementable. Accordingly, MACC respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report **AS AMENDED** on **HB 457**.

Please contact Brad Phillips ([bphillips@mdacc.org](mailto:bphillips@mdacc.org)) or Drew Jabin ([djabin@mdacc.org](mailto:djabin@mdacc.org)) with questions.

# HB 457 - Senate - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mercer

Position: FAV



**BILL NUMBER:** HB 457

**TITLE:** Institutions of Higher Education – Free Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, & the Environment

**HEARING DATE:** March 25, 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable

Reproductive Justice Maryland Action supports House Bill 457 in keeping with our mission to champion reproductive justice as a fundamental human right for all Marylanders. We believe that everyone deserves the ability to manage their reproductive health with dignity, safety, and autonomy, free from stigma and unnecessary barriers. This includes ensuring that students who menstruate have reliable access to menstrual hygiene products in all restrooms at institutions of higher education.

Period product insecurity is well-documented among young adults. Research shows that many college students experience financial hardship, food insecurity, and housing instability, conditions that increase the likelihood of being unable to afford basic hygiene products.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Studies conducted among U.S. women and college-aged populations have found significant associations between menstrual product insecurity and increased stress, shame, and depressive symptoms.<sup>1</sup> When students are forced to leave class, miss work, or navigate campus without access to necessary products, their academic engagement and well-being suffer.

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<sup>1</sup> Cardoso, L.F., Scolese, A.M., Hamidaddin, A. *et al.* Period poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States. *BMC Women's Health* 21, 14 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5>

<sup>2</sup> Seed, L., Biju, A., & Johnson, E. (2022). Period product insecurity in higher education: A call for change. *BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health*, 48(4), 313–314. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjshr-2022-201489>

<sup>3</sup> *Period Poverty Among College Students: Access, Equity, and Strategies to Address the Issue*. National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (n.d.). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED653006.pdf?utm>

Maryland has made progress in advancing menstrual equity in K–12 schools. House Bill 457 builds upon that foundation by extending protections to students in higher education settings. College campuses serve diverse populations, including low-income students, first-generation students, parenting students, transgender and nonbinary students, and students experiencing housing instability. For many, campus facilities are where they spend the majority of their day. Ensuring that menstrual hygiene products are available in all restrooms, regardless of gender designation, promotes dignity, inclusion, and educational equity.

The requirement that products be provided free of charge is critical. Even small out-of-pocket costs can create barriers for students already balancing tuition, housing, transportation, and food expenses. Additionally, providing products in restrooms normalizes menstruation as a routine biological function and reduces stigma, aligning campus policies with broader public health principles.

Importantly, this legislation is not only a gender equity measure, but also a public health and economic investment. Educational attainment is strongly associated with long-term earnings, workforce participation, and economic mobility.<sup>4</sup> Supporting students' ability to remain in class, focused, and engaged without interruption due to a basic health need is a modest but meaningful step toward strengthening Maryland's future workforce.

House Bill 457 represents a practical, evidence-informed policy solution that advances dignity, equity, and student success across Maryland's higher education institutions. For these reasons, Reproductive Justice Maryland Action respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 457.

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<sup>4</sup> *Social Security Administration*. The United States Social Security Administration. (n.d.). [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/research-summaries/education-earnings.html?utm\\_](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/research-summaries/education-earnings.html?utm_)

## **3.23 - HB 457 - Institutions of Higher Education -**

Uploaded by: Lonia Muckle

Position: FAV



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

**March 25, 2026**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 457. This bill requires institutions of higher education to provide menstrual hygiene products, free of charge, in all restrooms on campus.

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.**

HB 457 is a straightforward, practical step toward strengthening financial security for Maryland students and advancing menstrual equity.

For many students, especially those from low- and moderate-income households, college is already a financial balancing act. Tuition, housing, food, books, and transportation costs continue to rise. Even relatively small recurring expenses can destabilize a tight budget. Menstrual products are not optional. They are a necessary health item. Yet students must purchase them month after month, year after year, regardless of their financial situation.

Many students in Maryland come from low-income households or experience housing instability, making access to basic hygiene necessities inconsistent or uncertain. For students living paycheck to paycheck or relying on financial aid refunds to cover essentials, the cost of menstrual products competes directly with food, transportation, and other necessities. No student should have to choose between a meal and managing a natural bodily function.

This burden is compounded by what is commonly referred to as the "pink tax" which is the pattern of women's products being priced higher than comparable men's products. While Maryland has made progress in addressing sales tax inequities, the broader economic reality remains: menstruation carries a recurring financial cost that is borne disproportionately by those who menstruate. Over time, these costs add up significantly, particularly for students already facing economic insecurity.

Access to education should not be undermined by preventable financial barriers. By normalizing and institutionalizing access to menstrual hygiene products, Maryland affirms that student dignity, health, and financial stability matter.

***Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 457.***

*Creating Assets, Savings and Hope*

**2026 hb0457 Test Favor 032326.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melinda Littell

Position: FAV

**Testimony Supporting HB0457**

**Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement**

**FAVORABLE**

March 23, 2026

The Honorable Chair Senator Brian J. Feldman; Vice Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan; and esteemed members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to ask you to vote favorably on Senate Bill 457. This bill would require institutions of higher education to provide menstrual hygiene products, free of charge, in all restrooms by August 1, 2028.

This expansion of the requirement to provide menstrual hygiene products would help ensure these medical necessities are available to all who need them, regardless of socioeconomic status. Students may struggle with affordability of many things while they attend college, and this service would provide support for their physical health as well as their dignity during a normal bodily function.

Importantly, the bill would also make menstrual hygiene products accessible in *all restrooms*, regardless of gender designation. As an ally of transgender and nonbinary individuals, I recognize that **users of restrooms designated for use by males may have need of these products and should not be prevented from accessing them**. This would be a step toward inclusion, understanding, and health equity for LGBTQ+ individuals on college campuses.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable vote for HB0457.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Littell  
Arnold, D33C

# 2025 WLC HB 457 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV

**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Bill:** House Bill 457 – Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement

**Hearing Date:** March 25, 2026

**Position:** Support

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The Women's Law Center of Maryland supports *House Bill 457 – Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement*. The bill requires public higher education institutions to provide menstrual hygiene products without costs.

Providing people who menstruate with menstrual products is a matter of simple human dignity. A recent study found that 14.2% of college students who menstruate faced challenges in affording menstrual products, leading to absenteeism and academic difficulties.<sup>i,ii</sup> Maryland has already taken steps to address this problem for younger students in our public school system. House Bill 457 extends Maryland's work to address period poverty issues to support higher education students.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8432759/>

***The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.***

**2026 ACNM HB457 Senate Side.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Bill:** House Bill 457 – Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement

**Hearing Date:** March 25, 2026

**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 457 – Institutions of Higher Education – Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement*. This legislation requires institutions of higher education to provide free menstrual hygiene products in all restrooms.

House Bill 457 effectively addresses access to menstrual care, a crucial issue in public health and education. In Maryland, 1 in 8 women and girls between the ages of 12 and 44, including many college-aged students, live below the Federal Poverty Line (Alliance for Period Supplies, *Maryland*). These supplies are necessities for all who menstruate. The lack of these products can lead to missed class time, academic consequences, anxiety, and depression (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, *Period Poverty Among College Students*). By providing these products for free in campus restrooms, students can spend more time focused on their studies.

ACNM recognizes the importance of menstrual health support and how it is a basic component of overall well-being. Availability of these products supports students' health and educational success. Low-income students are particularly impacted by health inequities. Maryland taking the step to address period poverty ensures students of all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to the products that they need. It is critical to normalize and support menstrual hygiene products for everyone. House Bill 457 promotes health equity, educational success, and inclusive Maryland college campuses.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

# **HB 457 - support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sari Wisch

Position: FAV



March 23, 2026

To: The Members of the Senate Education Energy and Environment Committee

CC: Delegate Jessica Feldmark

From: The Members of the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women

RE: HB 457- Institutions of Higher Education Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products –Requirement

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women is urging to you to please support HB 457 – Institutions of Higher Education Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Product (Del. Feldmark). This bill requires each institution of higher education to provide, free of charge, menstrual hygiene products in all restrooms by August 1, 2028. Current Law: Chapters 705 and 706 of 2021 require each local board of education to ensure that each public school provide, at no charge to the students, menstrual hygiene products via dispensers in the women’s restrooms at the school. A public middle or high school must install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in all women’s restrooms. A public elementary school must install menstrual hygiene product dispensers in at least one restroom.

This bill is extremely important, as girls and women will spend and do spend thousands of dollars on menstrual products throughout their lifetime. If a girl starts menstruating at age 10 or 11, they will menstruate for at least another 40-45 years. Costs are continually rising, and approximately 100,000 college students in Maryland are receiving financial aid. This bill, should it pass, would alleviate the financial burden for females as they would know that menstrual products are accessible on their campus and they would not need to worry about their personal finances as to whether or not they could afford to purchase menstrual products every month during their years of attending college and/or graduate school.

The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women supports women and girls and works to ensure women and girls thrive and succeed. We ask you to please give this bill a favorable report and vote in support of HB 457 to advance it in the legislative process. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women Legislative Committee:  
Sari Wisch, Vice Chair of the AA Co Commission for Women  
Aisha Hilliard, Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee  
CaSandra Jones, Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee

Michele Pickens  
Meghan Honesto

*The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women was created in 1975 to serve as a resource and advocacy group for women of the County and to advise the County Executive on issues of significance to women. The Commissioners, comprised of women with different backgrounds and occupations, represent various areas of the County. The County Executive appoints Commissioners who are dedicated to improving the quality of life for the women of our County.*

**PPM- HB 457- FAV 2.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tica Torres

Position: FAV

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Energy, Educations, and the Environment Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>House Bill 457 Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement</b>
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>March 25, 2026</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Favorable</b>

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Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) supports *House Bill 457 Institutions of Higher Education - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement*. This bill as amended requires Maryland colleges and universities, with on-campus housing, to provide free menstrual hygiene products to students by ensuring they are available in campus student health centers.

Maryland has taken meaningful steps to ensure that students in K–12 public schools have access to free menstrual products. But period poverty does not end at high school graduation. College students, whom may be financially independent, working multiple jobs, or supporting families, continue to face barriers to accessing menstrual products. These barriers often have impacts on academic participation, student well-being, and educational equity.

National [data](#) show that period poverty is a serious barrier for college students, with 14.2% unable to afford menstrual products at least once in the past year and 10% experiencing this every month. The burden falls disproportionately on Black, Latina, first-generation, and low-income students; groups that are strongly represented across Maryland’s universities and community colleges.

Menstrual products are as essential as toilet paper and soap. Ensuring access is a matter of dignity, equity, and student success. By passing HB457, Maryland will support students’ ability to fully participate in their education and continue the state’s leadership in menstrual equity.

For these reasons, Planned Parenthood of Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 457. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Vice President of Public Affairs, Erin Bradley, at [erin.bradley@ppm.care](mailto:erin.bradley@ppm.care).

**2026.03.23 HSMP HB457 Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Amanda Oppler

Position: FWA



Monday, March 23, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan  
Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership (HSMP), a Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) dedicated to advancing health equity and well-being for residents of St. Mary's County and Southern Maryland, we write to express strong support for *House Bill 457 Institutions of Higher Education — Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products — Requirement*. However, we urge the Committee to adopt the original text of HB 457, which would require each institution of higher education in Maryland to ensure that menstrual hygiene products are provided free of charge in all restrooms at institutions of higher education by August 1, 2028. While we appreciate the House's favorable response to the legislation, we believe that providing the products in all restrooms, rather than just at student health centers, is more equitable and provides the best opportunity for students to access the products at their own convenience.

Access to menstrual hygiene products is not a luxury; it is a fundamental aspect of health, dignity, and equal opportunity. In Maryland and across the nation, students at colleges and universities frequently report challenges in accessing basic menstrual supplies, which can lead to stress, diminished classroom engagement, absenteeism, and negative impacts on academic success.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Removing these barriers is essential to supporting the health and well-being of all students, especially those from low-income backgrounds and rural areas where access off campus may be limited.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stewart, C. (2025). *Percentage of female college students in the U.S. who have felt forced to decide between menstrual products and other personal costs in 2023*. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1424077/us-college-students-period-poverty/>

<sup>2</sup> Stewart, C. (2025). *Percentage of college students in the United States who have known someone or personally struggled with access to menstrual products in 2023*. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1424063/us-college-students-limited-period-product-access/>

<sup>3</sup> Suleman, A., Krishna, S., Krisnakumar, D., Nemoto, K., Nguyen, M. L. T., Mehta, S. D. (2024). A pilot survey of students' menstrual attitudes, experiences, and needs on an urban university campus. *Womens Health (Lond)*. 2024 Jan-Dec;20:17455057241254713. doi: [10.1177/17455057241254713](https://doi.org/10.1177/17455057241254713).

<sup>4</sup> PERIOD. (2025). *Period Poverty*. <https://period.org/periodpoverty>

For many students from rural communities like St. Mary's County, travel to campus may involve significant time and cost, and local retail options for menstrual products may be limited or subject to financial constraints. Providing free menstrual products in institutional restrooms on campus reduces barriers created by geography, transportation, and income, ensuring that students can fully participate in academic and social activities without avoidable health obstacles.

HB 457 complements broader menstrual equity efforts already underway in Maryland, including policies requiring menstrual product access in public schools, and supports a continuum of access from K-12 through postsecondary education. By establishing statewide standards for college campuses, where many students are transitioning to independent living, this legislation helps normalize menstrual support as an integral part of educational environments.

Additionally, ensuring free access to menstrual products aligns with public health best practices. Consistent availability of safe, appropriate menstrual supplies contributes to improved menstrual hygiene management, reduces the risk of infection and discomfort, and supports emotional well-being and dignity.<sup>5</sup> This is especially important for students balancing academic responsibilities with work and family obligations, many of whom may otherwise face difficult choices about how to allocate limited financial resources.

Consistent with HSMP's commitment to advancing health equity and stigma-free access to essential products through initiatives such as community period product drives, we strongly believe that HB 457 will have positive impacts on student health, equity, and retention across Maryland's institutions of higher education, especially in its original version. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to adopt the bill's original text and issue a favorable report on HB 457.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this important public health and educational equity legislation. Please reach out to [stmaryspartnership@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspartnership@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christine Delise  
Healthy St. Mary's Partnership  
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair



Tytiana Snyder  
Healthy St. Mary's Partnership  
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair

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<sup>5</sup> Centers for Educational Justice & Community Engagement (n.d.). *Menstrual Equity*. UC Berkeley. <https://cejce.berkeley.edu/centers/gender-equity-resource-center/resources/womens-resources/advocacy-issues/menstrual-equity>

# **HB0457 Senate Hearing Testimony (3\_23).pdf**

Uploaded by: Bella Nelson

Position: FWA

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee and Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

As a committed intern of the Young Women's Giving Circle of Howard County, and a senior attending Guilford Park High School, preparing to attend Hollins University, I am writing to express my unrelenting support for HB0457, a necessary piece of legislation that aligns heavily with the mission of the YWGC and will strengthen access to free menstrual hygiene products in the health centers within locations of higher education across Maryland.

The Young Women's Giving Circle of Howard County is a community of philanthropists working tirelessly to address and advocate for the needs of young women and girls throughout Howard County with the vision that women's philanthropy shapes the future for women and girls through the power of collective giving. In 2024 alone, we gave \$1.2 million from over 1,700 donors to support our efforts and, throughout our over 22 year commitment to the community of Howard County, we have given over 300 grants to nonprofit organizations and have a \$1.1 million endowment dedicated to making money in perpetuity to fund programs for benefits towards the young women and girls we work so tirelessly to assist and fight for. We plan on continuing this work for many, many more years to come and plan to continue to fight for the necessary legislation to support and combat period poverty in Howard County.

It is through the hard work of I and the other Young Women's Giving Circle interns that Del. Pamela Lanman Guzzone recognized the ongoing issues with legislation passed in 2021 requiring school systems to install dispensers of free period products, such as tampons, pads, and

sanitary napkins in restrooms in K-12 school systems. However, this is not the case with buildings of higher education, such as public colleges with houses on campus. Del. Guzzone's bill, with Senator Hettleman's crossfire, clarifies the expectation of all school systems in Howard County, whether of secondary or primary education; fill the dispensers in the restrooms and health centers.

This bill aligns heavily with the core values of the Young Women's Giving Circle, especially that of how the needs and concerns of all women and girls in Howard County must be fully understood, acknowledged, and addressed, and that available resources should be directed to achieving systematic change in the political, social, and economic institutions that influence the lives of women and girls. Enacting this measure would not only directly benefit students and staff members of higher education buildings with easy access to free menstrual health products, but it contributes further to a stronger, more inclusive Howard County, one that is open to accounting for all their citizens and will meet the health requirements of all that call Howard County home, regardless of gender orientation or bodily functions.

We hope you will support HB0457 and we deeply appreciate your leadership in advancing legislation that reflects the needs of our community. Your work is the gateway to a colossal wake of action and reflection for necessities met in communities when all come together and it is a beautiful sight to see.

Thank you for your service and your ongoing support and commitment to ensuring Howard County remains one of the most inclusive, compassionate, and forward-thinking

communities in the state of Maryland. A special thank you to Delegate Guzzone for her advocacy in this space and to Delegate Jessica Feldmark for her sharing to the senate of this bill in particular, as well as their combined support for the missions of the Young Women's Giving Circle. We cannot express our gratitude enough.

All the best,

Bella Nelson

YWGC Intern

**Seabright-HB457-Favorable (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Paula Seabright

Position: FWA

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the committee,  
My name is Paula Seabright and I am the co-chair of the Women's Giving Circle of Howard County's Grants Committee. I am also the chair of the Young Women's Giving Circle intern program. Our 10 high school interns learn about philanthropy, collective giving, leadership and advocacy through supporting our organization's efforts to impact period poverty.

In 2021, the MDGA passed legislation requiring public school systems to install period product dispensers in restrooms in their schools, starting the state on a path to making sure menstruating students have all the tools they need to succeed. We aren't there yet, but we are getting closer.

One of the steps in closing the gap for menstruating students to make the most of their educational opportunities comes in HB457. This bill requires publicly funded institutions of higher learning to make period products available to students.

A pilot study by the NIH published in 2024 stated that:

*17.1% of students have faced period poverty, 55.8% experienced period-related class disruption, and 47.5% avoided changing their menstrual products on campus. The relationships between the three menstrual experiences were statistically significant. In the open responses, students reported that their personal experiences with menstruation were largely painful and disruptive. We identified the following themes: (1) inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities; (2) understocked, empty, or non-existent menstrual product dispensers; (3) a desire for additional resources for menstruation; and (4) the unpredictability of menstruation.*<sup>1</sup>

Among the recommendations for improving the educational experience for menstruating students, the study authors stated schools should provide free menstrual products.

The Women's Giving Circle has been doing our part to fight period poverty. Since December of 2024, we have held three community product drives collecting over 300 lbs of products for students in the Howard county public school system and at Howard Community College. And we've raised funds to purchase products for clients of our many nonprofit partners. We believe that one of the most important parts of philanthropic work is our ability to raise awareness about issues to people in positions to facilitate change. Del Feldmark has been a staunch supporter of our work. She's listened to our concerns and has filed this bill to help our voices have an even greater impact. Maryland has a chance to join five states and the District of Columbia in making period products free for menstruating students in higher education. Your favorable vote for the amended version of HB457 would be appreciated.

Thank you,  
Paula Seabright  
Columbia, MD

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<sup>1</sup> NIH Source: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11143816/>