



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

**February 19, 2026**

**House Bill 891**

**Correctional Services - Incarcerated Individuals - Menstrual Hygiene  
House Government, Labor, and Elections 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.

**Senate Bill 73** requires the Patuxent Institution and each State and local correctional facility to maintain records on instances of items damaged or destroyed due to visible leakage of menstrual discharge under certain circumstances; prohibiting the Patuxent Institution and each State and local correctional facility from subjecting female incarcerated individuals to disciplinary measures for items damaged or destroyed without malicious intent due to visible leakage of menstrual discharge.

Ensuring that women are not punished for a natural biological process is a matter of basic human dignity. Across the United States, incarcerated women often have insufficient access to menstrual products, forcing many to improvise with unsafe materials like toilet paper, rags, or torn clothing, which can increase the risk of infection and health complications. In some facilities, strict rules treat menstrual leakage or the use of makeshift materials as contraband or misconduct, leading to disciplinary write-ups that can affect parole, privileges, or other aspects of confinement.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of access to adequate menstrual supplies creates what advocates describe as “period poverty” behind bars, compounding the physical and emotional harm of incarceration. In surveys of women in the criminal legal system, many reported being given too few products, needing to barter for supplies, and suffering negative health outcomes from prolonged or inadequate use.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/11/12/discipline\\_menstruation/?utm\\_source](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/11/12/discipline_menstruation/?utm_source)

<sup>2</sup> [https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10510683/?utm\\_source](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10510683/?utm_source)

Policies that allow discipline for menstrual leakage or related damage treat menstruation as misconduct rather than a normal bodily function, which undermines health equity and respect for incarcerated women's basic rights. Denying sufficient menstrual products and penalizing natural biological needs fosters humiliation and dehumanization rather than humane care. By protecting women from disciplinary sanctions in these circumstances and reinforcing the need for proper menstrual care, this bill affirms that all women — including those who are incarcerated — deserve respect, dignity, and access to fundamental health needs without punishment.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 891**.

Thank you for your consideration.