

Good afternoon. My name is Lay Shah, and I am a senior at Mount Hebron High School in Ellicott City, District 9B. I write in support of House Bill 541.

I'm a guy, so this issue doesn't affect me directly. I have never had to worry about whether a dispenser in a restroom is stocked. But that's exactly why I'm writing today -- because equity shouldn't depend on whether an issue touches you personally.

At Mt. Hebron and in my community, I've know classmates who deal with empty dispensers that are supposed to provide free menstrual products under existing law. The dispensers are there. The products often are not. Students end up scrambling between restrooms, missing class, or asking around in embarrassment -- exactly the situation HB205 was meant to prevent.

HB 541 is a straightforward fix: require schools to actually keep the dispensers stocked. No new infrastructure, no major cost -- just accountability for a commitment Maryland already made to its students.

As someone who has led multiple student organizations at Mt. Hebron, I've learned that good policy means nothing without follow-through. A rule on paper that doesn't translate to action just breeds frustration and erodes trust. This bill ensures that the intent behind HB205 becomes the reality students experience every day.

Ways and Means Committee, I urge you to pass HB 541. Every student in Maryland deserves to go to school without worrying about access to basic hygiene products -- and the rest of us have a responsibility to make sure that happens.

Thank you for your time.