

Good evening, my name is Ahana Roy and I am a current high school junior and constituent from Legislative district 9A. I submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 541.

In 2021, Maryland took an important step toward menstrual equity by requiring schools to provide free menstrual hygiene products in restrooms through the passage of HB205. The idea was beneficial: no student should miss instructional time, experience embarrassment, or feel stigma because they lack access to basic hygiene necessities.

However, the gains of that policy are only fulfilled when products are consistently available.

Too often, students enter restrooms expecting access to a pad or tampon...only to find empty dispensers. In those moments, we are forced to look for help, skipping class to search another bathroom, or enduring discomfort and anxiety for the rest of the day. For some students, especially those facing financial hardship, school may be their only reliable access point for these products.

House Bill 541 addresses this gap by requiring county boards of education to regularly restock menstrual hygiene product dispensers to ensure availability. This is not an expansion of the original policy; it is a reinforcement of it.

Reliable access to menstrual products is about more than convenience. It is about preserving students' confidence, preventing missed instructional time, and reducing stigma around menstruation

I respectfully urge you to consider the menstrual product access bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration.