



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov
FAX 410-313-3051

February 23, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of House Bill 541: Restocking Menstrual Hygiene Products – Requirement**

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

Menstruation is a biological reality that can quietly disrupt the education, health, and daily lives of millions of girls and women worldwide if not equipped with the necessary products to endure. Every month, lives are put on hold as girls and women are forced to navigate the pain, stigma, and disruption that comes with menstruating in a world that still refuses to fully accommodate their needs. We have a collective responsibility to make a change.

By normalizing menstruation and guaranteeing free products are always readily available in all Maryland public schools, HB541 ensures our youth have the feminine sanitary supplies they need. Just like toilet paper is a norm, access to feminine products should also be normalized. In doing so, we will not only reduce the stigma that comes with menstruation but boost students' confidence and self-esteem. Providing these essential products free of charge will reduce financial distress as studies show that one in four students struggle with “period poverty” as they lack access to products.

To ensure Howard County Government is supporting the needs of its visitors, this past fall, I pledged to stock all County buildings, including libraries and senior centers, with free menstrual products by the end of 2025. Dispensers can now be found in our facilities' women's and all-gender bathrooms, with a number to call if products run out. This decision was inspired by Howard County youth Isha Ande and her peers at Mt. Hebron High School who have become prominent advocates for menstrual equity in our community.

I urge the Committee to **support HB541**. This bill is an important step toward normalizing menstruation, reducing stigma, and ensuring our youth have the essential hygiene products necessary to thrive without barriers and focus on their academics.

A special thank you to our county's own Delegate Pam Lanman Guzzone for leading this charge.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive