

Date of Hearing: January 11, 2023

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committee

From: Alma Lopez, 320 Lincoln Ave Gaylord MN, 55334

Dear Committee members,

My name is Alma Lopez and I am graduate of Arlington High School and Minnesota State University Mankato. I am writing to you for support of HF 44 which would give people who menstruate free access to necessary products in school bathrooms.

As a person who menstruates, I have experienced first-hand the discomfort of lack of accessible menstrual products. I can recall the moment of panic in middle school when a period came unexpectedly in the middle of class and I did not have the necessary products. From there on, my education became disrupted from embarrassment and discomfort. Having to rush to a bathroom only to find that I did not have the quarters with me to buy a pad or tampon from the menstrual product machines or at times there not even being a dispenser. The only resort being wads of toilet paper or having to ask around for someone to lend me a product. I have heard stories from others having to have a "tab" with the school nurse to receive a menstrual product. These stories are common occurrences within menstruators all of which could be prevented by having accessible and free products within schools. Menstrual products should not be treated as a luxury as they are essential needs. Furthermore, having menstrual products will allow students to better focus on their education and reduce the stigma that surrounds a normal bodily occurrence.

Date of Hearing:

To: Members of the House Education Finance Committee and the House Education Policy Committee

From: Danith Clausen
10300 Rachel Shores SW
Farwell MN 56327

Chair Youakim, Chair Pryor and members of the committees,
My name is Danith Clausen. I am a retired Minnesota educator. For over three decades I worked in rural schools. I submit this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to free menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Minnesotans value education. We want all of our students to reach their full potential. The conversations I have with my son and my niece, both teachers, often come to a sadly familiar conclusion: You can't teacher a student who isn't there. A student should not be forced to stay home from school five days (or more) every four weeks because her family cannot afford to buy menstrual products for her, and she cannot afford them for herself. "Period poverty" disrupts a student's learning, piling up absences and negatively impacting her ability to succeed.

HF 44 has the ability to reduce absenteeism for students in poverty by providing simple necessities that are no different from toilet paper or paper towels. This bill can make sure our students are "period secure," able to concentrate on their studies instead of worrying about their menstrual cycles. I ask that you support providing access to free menstrual products in school bathrooms.

Thank you for keeping the well-being of our students in mind while you do your important work.

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Diane Kohen, Physical Education Teacher, Health Teacher, Adapted Physical Education Teacher, Coach - St. Louis Park Middle School

It is time. I am in my 39th year of teaching Health, Physical Education, Adapted Physical Education as well as coaching multiple sports. During this time I have seen the struggles of our families increase. At St. Louis Park Middle School, many of our female students have their period or get it for the first time. The situations we deal with are extremely diverse from communicating with family members, sometimes through an interpreter, teaching the physiological changes that are taking place through puberty, and reinforcing that there is no shame in what is happening to their body. To acknowledge that body changes are happening and provide a safe place to get menstrual products and assist individuals to embrace their body and learn how to live with their period is crucial to their self esteem and emotional well being. I am a strong supporter of the bill because I witness every day how my students may have to choose between food on the table or other items like menstrual products. Schools provide free and reduced breakfasts and lunches to those who qualify. It is past time to provide menstrual products to those in need so they can feel good about themselves and not worry what will happen to their clothes without the appropriate supplies. They can embrace who they are and come to school ready to learn without fear of being made fun of. Through NCJW we have received supplies to provide to the girls; free pads and/or tampons and it is very impactful to the girls to know they have a place to go to privately take care of their business. I see how thankful they are and how this allows them to stay in school and learn how to best deal with their changing bodies.

Addressing period poverty is long overdue and is essential to ensuring educational equity for our diverse populations, and for that matter, all our female students.

Date of Hearing: TBA

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Drew ScottRussell, 3220 Hopkins crossroad Minnetonka MN 55305

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Drew ScottRussell and I am a junior at Hopkins High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Period products in school restrooms are a necessity. Teens should not be financially responsible for themselves when their parents and school are unable to afford these products. If we are expected to learn at our best abilities then we should be provided with the materials that we need. All students should have the right to go to school without the interruption of blood in your pants.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Kathleen Mahli, E-STEM Middle School (Saint Paul Public Schools)

Chair Laurie Pryor and Members of the House Education Policy Committee, my name is Kathleen Mahli and I am a licensed school nurse at E-STEM Middle School in St. Paul. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to briefly speak with you today about an important health issue that impacts half of our student population. This statement is in support of HF 44 which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

As a middle school nurse, I assist several students daily that are unexpectedly in need of menstrual supplies. As you can imagine, this is a humiliating experience for my sixth to eighth grade students. In my office, I seek donations and also purchase menstrual supplies to attempt to supply the 300+ female students for when they are in need. The donations and my personal funds are limited and the sustainability is uncertain. Because of financial barriers, some students are unable to attend school due to lack of menstrual supplies. This is a very unfortunate and inequitable situation that leads to poor academic outcomes.

On the bright side, the menstrual inequity issue can be easily fixed. By providing free menstrual supplies in school restrooms across the state, humiliating situations will be avoided and absenteeism will be decreased. Menstrual supplies are a basic hygienic necessity and should be as readily available to students as toilet paper. It's time to move forward with an equitable plan for all students.

Date of Hearing: TBA

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Larissa Gust, 121 3rd St N Delano MN, 55328

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Larissa Gust and I am a graduate of Delano High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Putting free period products in bathrooms will enable all menstruating students to feel comfortable and focus on school. I, and many of my friends, have experienced the embarrassment and discomfort that comes with not having a pad or tampon when you need it and it disrupts your day making learning difficult. All menstruators deserve to be able to have their basic needs met at school.

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From Maarit Mattson, 20100 Horseshoe Lane, Mankato, Minnesota

Chair Laurie Pryor, Chair Cheryl Youakim, and committee members, my name is Maarit Mattson and I am fourteen years old. I am a student at Mankato East High School, and I present this statement in support of HF 44; which aims to provide access to free menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Providing free period products would remove unnecessary stress from students' everyday lives. Every menstruating individual knows what it's like to be caught off-guard without the supplies you need, but this does not need to be the reality. We can provide students with the period products they need for a safer, more equitable learning experience. Nobody deserves to worry whether they will have access to or be able to afford basic hygiene products while they are at school.

Right now, it is up to students to help provide for themselves and each other. I am currently working with a group of other students to plan a period product drive across my district to make sure that every student has access to the products they need no matter their financial standing.

I am fortunate enough that this is not a concern for me, but many people are not, and access to period products should not be based on the good fortune of the student.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Natalie Rizkalla, 17708 George Moran Dr, Eden Prairie MN

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Natalie Rizkalla and I am a freshman at Holy Family Catholic High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

I can speak for me and for all my friends knowing that we all have struggles when it comes to our period so having the access to free period products in all bathrooms would for sure make me feel way more comfortable. The struggle can be real so having those products would really relieve some stress off my shoulders. This would help me to excel in school because I wouldn't have to take the time out of class to search for a pad or tampon and I would be able to spend more time in the classroom. I think that this would have a tremendous benefit on all students around the state.

Date of Hearing: TBA

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Nurah Muhammad, 9006 Idaho Ave N, 55445

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Nurah Muhammad and I am a student at Osseo Senior High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

As a student, I think that one of the saddest things I witness within school is the lack of period products. Other females my age are not being able to come to school because they don't have enough resources to get them through the day. I am very fortunate to have our clubs take initiative and raise fundraisers, collecting necessities for our fellow students, however I don't believe it should stop with students, which is why I write this. We shouldn't spend our day unsure if what we have is enough to get us through the day, or reliant on someone else. Resources in school should be a necessity. I'm here because I want my fellow peers to be able to walk into the restrooms with a sense of relief, knowing that no matter what they are taken care of.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Robin Philips, 7906 Victoria Curve, St Louis Park, MN 55426

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Robin Phillips and I am the executive director of The Advocates for Human Rights, headquartered in Minneapolis. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Equal access to education and health are fundamental human rights. Recent data indicate that nearly one in five girls has missed school because of lack of access to menstrual products. Removing this barrier to full access to education is a relatively small effort that will have a big impact.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Sandy Velazquez, 1425 Galtier St., Saint Paul, MN

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor, and committee members, my name is Sandy Velazquez and I am a Health Mentor at El Colegio High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

As a Health Mentor my role at El Colegio is to provide students with resources and information on how to keep their bodies healthy. Part of that includes providing education on topics like puberty and naturally menstruation, and so access to menstrual products. I currently help stock one of the school bathrooms with these types of resources and this being my 2nd year here at the school managing those resources, I see first hand the high need the students have when it comes to having access to these resources. You see, at El Colegio we often get students who have recently arrive to the U.S. and most of the time they arrive with hardly anything. So being able to provide these things takes some of the burden off their load and they can instead focus on coming to school and staying in school. I stock these supplies at least once a week and I get these supplies primarily from donations. I also provide 1on1 education to the students and a lot of our students often come and talk to me about their cycle, in one situation we have had special education students going a full day with out being able to change their pads, leading to having them change their clothes due to leaking out, and we have been working with these students to teach them the skills on how to take care of their body, but also being able to stock the bathroom consistently and show these students that we have supplies for them so they don't have to wait all day is key. There also have been a handful of other students who have had to change or go home when accidents happen. As of right now we must keep a stock of not only menstrual products but change of underwear and pants for our students who have accidents to try our best to keep them at school. If we had a more reliable way of sustainably keeping these resources for our students here at school, it would be less of a burden on us the support staff who must continuously try to find donations of both clothes, and hygiene products for our students. If the chairs and committee were to decide to put menstrual products in the school bathrooms across the state of Minnesota, I do believe that we would see more students at school and staying in school. We would be supporting our students who menstruate and demonstrating to them that when we say we care about their overall health and wellbeing, we mean it!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sandy Velazquez

Date of Hearing: TBA

To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Taubie Sanders

424 Yosemite Ave. N

Golden Valley, MN 55422

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Taubie Sanders and I am a freshman at the University of Denver and a graduate of Hopkins High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Putting free period products in bathrooms will enable all menstruating students to have the same educational opportunities as their peers. By having free period products in all Minnesota school bathrooms, menstruators will not have to miss extensive amounts of class and stigma surrounding menstruation will be lessened. Myself and my peers have all dealt with negative and embarrassing menstruation experiences in school that have interfered with our education and put us at a disadvantage. With free period products in school bathrooms these experiences would not exist.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Track Trachtenberg, 3325 Pillsbury Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Track Trachtenberg and I am a Minneapolis resident and former staff member in a Minneapolis high school. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

Putting free period products in bathrooms will enable all menstruating students to feel comfortable and focus on school. As a former youth worker, I know that it was disruptive and embarrassing for students to not have menstrual products when they needed them - either because they forgot or because they couldn't afford them. No student should have their learning disrupted, or risk missing school, because they have their period. I am eager for us to reach a world where menstrual products are like soap and toilet paper - an automatic thing that each restroom should have.

I am also hopeful that once this bill is passed, it is implemented in a way that reaches all students who menstruate, and therefore there are some products included in gender-neutral and boy's restrooms as well. All students deserve to have their basic needs met at school.

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To: Members of the House Education Finance and House Education Policy Committees

From: Zara Fakier, 2623 Yosemite Ave S St. Louis Park MN

Chair Cheryl Youakim, Chair Laurie Pryor and committee members, my name is Zara Fakier and I am a sophomore at St. Louis Park High School. I provide this statement in support of HF 44, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

We need menstrual products in all school bathrooms because the lack of it is the cause of students missing school everyday. We deserve to go to school with the right supplies and not have to worry about leaking in class. School already forces pressures on us and this just makes it even harder. If we are finally all given products then students will feel safer, cared for, and respected.