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The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair
Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership (HSMP), a Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) dedicated to advancing health equity and well-being for residents of St. Mary's County and Southern Maryland, we write to express strong support for *House Bill 457 Institutions of Higher Education — Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products — Requirement*. HB 457 would require each institution of higher education in Maryland to ensure that menstrual hygiene products are provided free of charge in all restrooms at the institution by August 1, 2028.

Access to menstrual hygiene products is not a luxury; it is a fundamental aspect of health, dignity, and equal opportunity. In Maryland and across the nation, students at colleges and universities frequently report challenges in accessing basic menstrual supplies, which can lead to stress, diminished classroom engagement, absenteeism, and negative impacts on academic success.^{1,2,3} Removing these barriers is essential to supporting the health and well-being of all students, especially those from low-income backgrounds and rural areas where access off campus may be limited.⁴

For many students from rural communities like St. Mary's County, travel to campus may involve significant time and cost, and local retail options for menstrual products may be limited or

¹ Stewart, C. (2025). *Percentage of female college students in the U.S. who have felt forced to decide between menstrual products and other personal costs in 2023*. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1424077/us-college-students-period-poverty/>

² Stewart, C. (2025). *Percentage of college students in the United States who have known someone or personally struggled with access to menstrual products in 2023*. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1424063/us-college-students-limited-period-product-access/>

³ Suleman, A., Krishna, S., Krisnakumar, D., Nemoto, K., Nguyen, M. L. T., Mehta, S. D. (2024). A pilot survey of students' menstrual attitudes, experiences, and needs on an urban university campus. *Womens Health (Lond)*. 2024 Jan-Dec;20:17455057241254713. doi: [10.1177/17455057241254713](https://doi.org/10.1177/17455057241254713).

⁴ PERIOD. (2025). *Period Poverty*. <https://period.org/periodpoverty>

subject to financial constraints. Providing free menstrual products in institutional restrooms on campus reduces barriers created by geography, transportation, and income, ensuring that students can fully participate in academic and social activities without avoidable health obstacles.

HB 457 complements broader menstrual equity efforts already underway in Maryland, including policies requiring menstrual product access in public schools, and supports a continuum of access from K-12 through postsecondary education. By establishing statewide standards for college campuses, where many students are transitioning to independent living, this legislation helps normalize menstrual support as an integral part of educational environments.

Additionally, ensuring free access to menstrual products aligns with public health best practices. Consistent availability of safe, appropriate menstrual supplies contributes to improved menstrual hygiene management, reduces the risk of infection and discomfort, and supports emotional well-being and dignity.⁵ This is especially important for students balancing academic responsibilities with work and family obligations, many of whom may otherwise face difficult choices about how to allocate limited financial resources.

Consistent with HSMP's commitment to advancing health equity and stigma-free access to essential products through initiatives such as community period product drives, we strongly believe that HB 457 will have positive impacts on student health, equity, and retention across Maryland's institutions of higher education. Therefore, we respectfully urge the House Appropriations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 457 and support its passage.

Thank you for your leadership and thoughtful consideration of this important public health and educational equity legislation. Please reach out to stmaryspartnership@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christine Delise

Christine Delise
Healthy St. Mary's Partnership
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair

Tytiana Snyder

Tytiana Snyder
Healthy St. Mary's Partnership
Environmental Health Action Team Co-Chair

⁵ Centers for Educational Justice & Community Engagement (n.d.). *Menstrual Equity*. UC Berkeley. <https://cejce.berkeley.edu/centers/gender-equity-resource-center/resources/womens-resources/advocacy-issues/menstrual-equity>