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The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Jessica Feldmark
Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, 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 all residents of St. Mary's County and the broader Southern Maryland region, we write to express our strong support for *House Bill 541 Public Schools — Restocking Menstrual Hygiene Products — Requirement*. HB 541 would require each county board of education to ensure that menstrual hygiene product dispensers in public school women's restrooms are regularly restocked and available to students at no cost.

HSMP's work in menstrual equity, including coordinating community period product drives, supporting local distribution efforts, and engaging partners in education around period poverty,¹ has shown that lack of reliable access to menstrual products negatively affects students' health, attendance, and dignity. In rural counties like St. Mary's County, where transportation barriers and limited retail access can further restrict availability, schools often serve as one of the most reliable and equitable access points for essential menstrual supplies.

While Maryland has made important progress in menstrual equity, including requiring the installation of menstrual product dispensers in schools, access gaps remain when those dispensers are not consistently stocked. HB 541 appropriately addresses this issue by shifting the focus from installation alone to ongoing availability, ensuring that students can rely on these products when they need them most.

We also respectfully note that the original legislation² allocated \$500,000 statewide for the provision of menstrual hygiene products in fiscal year 2023, an amount that is insufficient to

¹ Healthy St. Mary's Partnership. *Period Supply Drive Toolkit*. <https://healthystmarys.com/period-supply-drive-toolkit/>

² House Bill 205 (2021). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/bills/hb/hb0205E.pdf>

meet the needs of students across Maryland's public school system. When distributed across 24 local education agencies and hundreds of school buildings, this level of funding cannot sustainably support consistent restocking throughout the school year. Further, the legislation does not guarantee funding for future years. Without adequate and stable funding, school systems may be forced to ration supplies, rely on ad-hoc donations, or divert limited local resources — all of which undermine the intent of the policy. For HB 541 to achieve its full impact, HSMP urges consideration of increased and ongoing funding for menstrual supplies so that schools can reliably meet student needs without interruption. Adequate and continuing investment will help ensure equitable implementation across counties, particularly in rural and lower-resourced communities, and will prevent disparities in access based on geography or local budget constraints.

Ensuring consistent access to menstrual products supports student attendance, reduces stress and stigma, and promotes dignity and full participation in school.³ For students in St. Mary's County and throughout Maryland, this policy represents a practical and evidence-based step toward improved educational and health outcomes.

For these reasons, the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership respectfully urges the House Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 541, and to support sufficient funding to ensure its successful implementation statewide. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this important health 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

³ Thinx & PERIOD (2023, June 10). *State of the Period 2023*. <https://period.org/uploads/SOTP-2023.pdf>