

## **OLR Backgrounder: Free Feminine Hygiene Products in Schools**

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### **Issues**

Does Connecticut require public schools to supply free feminine hygiene products (i.e., sanitary napkins and tampons) in their student restrooms? Have any other states enacted this requirement?

### **Summary**

State law does not require boards of education to provide students in their district schools with free feminine hygiene products in school restrooms or in the school nurse's office, but nothing would prohibit boards from voluntarily doing this.

A bill requiring school districts to provide these products without cost was proposed in Connecticut in 2017, but it did not become law. Four other states have passed this law (California, Illinois, New Hampshire, and New York). One state, Maryland, passed a law requiring county boards of education to provide a free supply of these products to homeless female students through school nurses.

### **Past Connecticut Proposal**

Legislation was proposed in 2017 to require that free feminine hygiene products be provided in schools, shelters, and correctional facilities ([Proposed Bill 6699](#)). The Public Health Committee did not give the bill a public hearing, but the requirement became law for York correctional facility in 2018 ([PA 18-4](#), § 3). OLR did not find any other legislation in the past 15 years.

## Other States

We found four other states that require public schools to make free feminine hygiene products available in school restrooms. Table 1 summarizes the relevant laws.

**Table 1: States Requiring Free Feminine Hygiene Products in School Restrooms**

<i>State</i>	<i>Description</i>
California	Requires that certain public schools make free feminine hygiene products available to students in grades 6-12 in at least 50% of their school restrooms  Applies to schools that qualify for federal Title I funding (i.e., meets the 40% pupil poverty threshold required to operate a <a href="#">Title I schoolwide program</a> )  Makes reimbursement available to local agencies and school districts if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the act contains state-mandated costs ( <a href="#">AB 10 (2017)</a> ), effective January 1, 2018)
Illinois	Requires school districts to make free feminine hygiene products available in public school bathrooms serving students in grades 6-12 ( <a href="#">Public Act 100-0163</a> , effective January 1, 2018)
New Hampshire	Requires school boards to make free feminine hygiene products available in public middle and high school restrooms designated for girls or as gender-neutral  Specifies that the school district must bear the cost, but it may accept grants or partner with a non-profit or community-based organization ( <a href="#">SB 142 (2019)</a> ), effective July 17, 2019)
New York	Requires all public schools with students in grades 6-12 to provide free feminine hygiene products in school restrooms ( <a href="#">N.Y. Pub. Health Law § 267</a> , effective July 1, 2018)

Maryland enacted a law specific to female homeless students ([MD Code Ann., Hous. & Cmty. Dev. § 4-2401](#)). It requires county boards of education to make free feminine hygiene products available to only these students through school nurses. The state's Department of Housing and Community Development must make these products available to the county boards in an amount sufficient to meet these students' needs during the normal school year. Eligible students are those determined to be homeless under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ([42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.](#)).

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