

Sabrina Uva

Public Health Committee Public Hearing Testimony

H.B. No. 5272 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

March 9, 2022

Hello, my name is Sabrina Uva. I am from Stamford, Connecticut and I am the President of the Student Government Association and founder of a service student organization, Huskies for Charity at the University of Connecticut-Stamford campus. I have a background in research within the field of Human Development and Family Sciences where I study the effects of protest activities on college students' mental health. My research skills combined with my passion for civic engagement bolstered my ability to lead various community initiatives to provide students with necessities, including menstrual products.

I would like to thank the members of the Public Health Committee for holding this hearing today and allowing me to share my efforts surrounding menstrual equity. I stand in support of H.B. No. 5272 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS as it is crucial to aid in reducing inequities among individuals who menstruate in public schools, universities, and shelters in Connecticut.

Menstrual equity is a necessity, not a luxury. Periods are too often stigmatized and menstrual products are a basic hygiene need, similar to soap and toilet paper. The burden for menstruators to carry products with them at all times and the stigma around periods needs to be broken. I can personally attest to experiencing the burden of not having access to menstrual products at school. The dispensers that are currently in the bathrooms require coins for payment and they are consistently empty. Students should not have to face a financial burden or stress when the need for menstrual products arise.

Lack of menstrual products is more than a barrier at school, it is a public health issue. Toxic shock syndrome and reproductive tract infections could occur when individuals that are unable to find products during the day wait longer than the recommended time to change their menstrual product. Breaking the stigma around menstrual maintenance is needed to protect the health of menstruators.

To address the stigma and inequities among menstruators, I have been a part of a state-wide coalition with State Representatives, nonprofit organizations, and other community leaders advocating for greater access to period supplies in Connecticut. I lead a menstrual equity initiative on campus that provided hundreds of products to students free of charge. Advocating for menstrual equity legislation along with creating a pilot program at my university are the next steps towards ensuring an equitable future for menstruating individuals.

Menstrual equity advocacy is crucial to amplify the need to provide greater access to menstrual products in public schools, universities, and shelters. Providing free access to these resources allows for menstruators to fully engage in the public sphere without financial barriers or fear of stigmatization. Menstrual equity is a necessity.

Thank you,
Sabrina Uva