



To: The Honorable Senator Rafferty, Chair
The Honorable Representative Brennan, Chair
Members, Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Mikenzie Dwyer, Intern with Maine Medical Association and University of New England Senior

Date: 20 April 2021

Re: **In Support**
LD 452, An Act To Require Certain Schools To Provide Menstrual Products

The Maine Medical Association is the State's largest professional physician organization representing more than 4,300 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine and promote the health of all Maine residents.

We are here in **support** of LD 452, An Act To Require Certain Schools To Provide Menstrual Products. Providing access to menstrual products in school is essential, because the product is essential. "Period poverty" is a very real and growing problem. One in five teens stated they have struggled to afford period products or haven't been able to purchase them at all – 84 percent stated they've missed school or know someone who has as a result¹. Requiring schools to provide menstrual products in all bathroom can work to eliminate some of the stigma and shame associated with menstruation. 64 percent believe society teaches people to be ashamed of their periods, 66 percent don't want to be at school when they are on their period, 80 percent feel there is a negative association with periods, that they are gross or

¹ Thinx & PERIOD. State of the Period: The widespread impact of period poverty on US students. https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788

unsanitary². Having to walk to the nurse and wait in the line of sick kids takes time away from being in class and can further the student's anxiety over their period.

I'd also like to note that many individuals' have longer periods due to medical conditions such as endometriosis. This increases the cost of period products as some experience menstruation beyond 7 days, and in some cases, menstruation is weeks long. Its suggested that at least 11% of women or more than 6 ½ million people in the U.S. suffer from endometriosis.

The idea of "menstrual equity" would make sure all students have what they need. Bills, such this one, are being filed across the country. Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Missouri, Florida, Maryland, and others have recently proposed such bills (See figure 1). Being a teenager is stressful enough besides having to worry about having access to period products. This is why we urge the committee to vote ought-to-pass for this important bill.

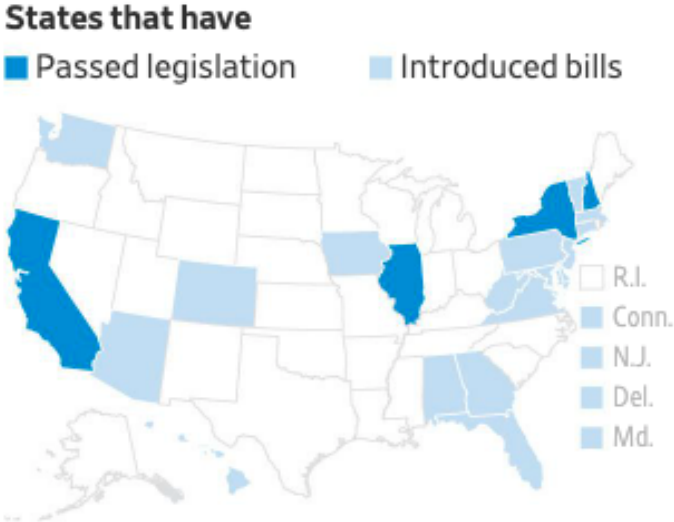
Thank you for your time. Happy to answer any questions or provide any further materials for the work session.

Sincerely,

Mikenzie Dwyer

² Stubbs ML. Cultural perceptions and practices around menarche and adolescent menstruation in the United States. *Ann N Y Acad Sci.* 2008;1135:58-66. doi: 10.1196/annals.1429.008. PMID: 18574209.

Figure 1. States that have passed/introduced similar legislation.



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures