

Testimony of for Public Hearing

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

April 8, 2021

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In Support of

In support of (L.D. 452) “An Act To Require Certain Schools To Provide Menstrual Products”

April 12, 2021

Senator Matthea Daughtry, Representative Michael Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

I am the Legislative Chair for the Maine Association of School Nurses (MASN) and a member of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). Currently I work as the school nurse at St. Dominic Academy in Lewiston, Maine. On behalf of MASN, please consider the following testimony in support of L.D. 452 “An Act To Require Certain Schools To Provide Menstrual Products”.

We at MASN support LD 452 as we are hopeful it will help to end the stigmatization our students face as related to “Period poverty”. Period poverty is the struggle many low-income families face while trying to afford menstrual products. Difficulty affording menstrual products can cause girls to stay home from school with lasting consequences on their education and economic opportunities. The students of Maine have the right to an education, the lack of ability to manage menstrual hygiene can contribute to higher rates of school absenteeism and poor educational outcomes (Thinkx & PERIOD 2019).

In many schools, nurses and faculty keep supplies for students experiencing Period Poverty that are paid for with funds from their minimal health office supply budget money or with personal funds. Keeping supplies in school bathrooms will allow students to avoid missing class or worse, possibly an entire day of school. This is a common sense law especially for our low-income communities that experience Period Poverty. Recently a School Nurse reached out via the MASN listserv asking for support as her budget had been depleted and she no longer had funds to provide supplies to her students. These are not healthcare supplies, they are basic hygiene products not different from facial tissues, bathroom tissues or paper towels that are currently provided for student use.

For these reasons, MASN supports L.D. 452 “An Act To Require Certain Schools To Provide Menstrual Products”.

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References:

National Association of School Nurses. (2015). Environmental Health in the School Setting: The Role of the School Nurse (Position Statement). Silver Spring, MD

Thinx & PERIOD (2019), State of the Period, The widespread impact of period poverty on U.S. students [White Paper]