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Senator Matthea Daughtry, Representative Michael Brennan, and members of the committee I'm submitting in favor of LD 452.

As a high school teacher, I encourage my elected officials to pass LD 452, which would require certain schools in Maine to provide menstrual products to students. Studies, along with common sense, continue to demonstrate that students cannot learn when they do not have their basic needs met.

We often think of basic needs as food and shelter but for people who menstruate, access to products is also a basic need. Beyond the potential physical discomfort that can distract students, the emotional toll of not knowing if they will be able to keep blood from staining their clothes and furniture is more than distracting, as I'm sure you can imagine. This can be debilitating.

In a world where we give all too many subtle, and not-so-subtle, messages to people who menstruate that they should be embarrassed about their period, providing free access to menstrual products shows young people that it is normal, and hopefully allows the younger generation to not feel the taboo in such a harmful manner. Providing free menstrual products is a step towards equity, and bodily autonomy, in how society and we ourselves view our bodies, beyond the concrete necessity for students to be able to focus on their studies and to develop into the people they want to be.