

Evelyn Titus
Orono
LD 348

My name is Evelyn Titus and I am a student at Orono Middle School. I am testifying in support for LD 348, An Act to Make Menstrual Products Available in Certain Schools.

Many Maine school systems do not provide menstrual products for their students. By doing this, I believe they are prioritizing one biological sex over the other. Four-fifths of teens who menstruate said that they often have to miss class due to not having a pad or tampon when they need one. Most of them miss entire classes, and some must go home altogether. This means that biological females are being set back in their classes for something far beyond their control.

Providing these products in the bathroom would not only prevent this kind of discrimination but also help the one in four menstruating students who experience period poverty. Period poverty is when a person cannot afford to buy their own menstrual products. This often leads to the use of unhygienic alternatives or wearing one product for long stretches of time which research shows can easily lead to toxic shock syndrome, cervical cancer, and several other severe health issues. Impoverished students already struggle a lot more than the average student, but the fact that they were born into a gender should not add to this. Many people feel that menstrual products are cheap enough as it is, but when you take into consideration that someone may be choosing to spend their last 10 dollars on food, clothing, or period products, it is a much more difficult situation than it may seem.

Obviously, cost plays a pretty significant role in this topic. Providing tampons for Maine schools would be expensive, but when you take in how many students this could help, it is worth it. The cost of toilet paper, soap, and water is also expensive, but we spend money on those without thought because they are considered necessities. Schools need to realize that menstruation is not a choice and that providing products to support it is the bare minimum. This is a basic right that has been denied for so long that it has become normalized.

At my school, they gave us a bin with menstrual products in it, but it has been empty for several months because nobody has bothered to refill it. I have been personally affected by this and I know several of my classmates have been as well. Seventy percent of menstruating students say they feel their school made them feel self-conscious about their period. Many of these schools do not even teach their students about menstruation at all, so when their students experience it first-hand, they have no idea what is happening. Passing this bill would help spread awareness for this cause and also help the thousands of menstruating students who are currently being unsupported.

Thank you for listening to my testimony. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration.