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Testimony in Support of  
LD 348, An Act to Make Menstrual Products Available in Certain Schools  
May 9, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, Maine Family Planning is submitting testimony today in support of LD 348, An Act to Make Menstrual Products Available in Certain Schools.

Maine Family Planning operates 18 community clinics specializing in sexual and reproductive health and provides pass-through funding for family planning services to 43 partners in reproductive health throughout the state. We also operate a Prevention Education department that works with K-12 educators, schools, and youth-serving organizations on comprehensive sexuality education that is inclusive, medically accurate, and age appropriate.

“Period poverty” is a term used to describe the inability to access and afford menstrual products and is part of a larger conversation about menstrual equity. Menstrual equity seeks to destigmatize menstruation, provide comprehensive reproductive health education, as well as ensure access to menstrual products.

Nearly 1 in 4 menstruators aged 13-19 reported struggling to access menstrual products in a nationally representative survey commissioned by Thinx and PERIOD in 2021. The same survey reported that 85% of students believe that schools should provide free menstrual products, and more than half of respondents said that the lack of products made them feel uncared for by their school. ([State-of-the-Period-2021.pdf](#))

"Often schools will say, 'We send anyone who asks for (period products) to the nurse's office,'" says Nancy Kramer, founder of Free the Tampons, a nonprofit advocating for freely accessible menstrual products in every public restroom. "And if you just think about this – that a young girl is in school, she goes to the bathroom and discovers she needs something. She then has to ask for permission to go to the nurse's office, go to the nurse's office, get what she needs and go back to the bathroom. How much class has she missed during that time?" (From: [How Schools Can Address Period Poverty | K-12 Schools | U.S. News \(usnews.com\)](#) Sept. 2022)

A lack of access to menstrual products impacts students' ability to focus and learn. Persistent shame and stigma associated with menstruation gives rise to fear and embarrassment about a normal bodily process. Lack of access to menstrual products exacerbates this anxiety. LD 348 is compassionate, common-sense legislation that provides tangible, meaningful support for students, and we urge the committee to vote unanimously ought to pass. Thank you.

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