

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



JOHN S.S. KIM
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
(‘AHA KULA HO‘ĀMANA)

<http://CharterCommission.Hawaii.Gov>
1111 Bishop Street, Suite 516, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: (808) 586-3775 Fax: (808) 586-3776

FOR: HB 2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality
DATE: February 8, 2022
COMMITTEE: House Committee on Education &
House Committee on Economic Development
ROOM: Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Kidani, Chair Quinlan and members of the Committees:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB 2249**. This measure appropriates funding to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses.

The Commission appreciates the support and attention of this committee and the Senate in ensuring that public charter schools are included in the effort to address menstrual equalities for public school students

The Commission does have questions regarding the cost, amount of product, procurement and implementation of the program. The Commission would appreciate working with the Legislature, Department of Education, and any other state agency associated with procuring and providing these items to ensure the most cost-effective method for our schools to meet this need.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:45:57 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Keith Hayashi	Hawaii Department of Education	Support	Yes

Comments:

Support



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/08/2022

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309 Via Videoconference

Committee: House Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 2249 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports HB 2249 and offers comments on this measure. This bill would require the Department to provide hygiene products such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap for free to all students on all public school campuses.

Toilet paper and hand soap are already available in all schools free of charge for all students and these products are included in the Department's budget. Menstrual products are available at some schools, although students may be charged a nominal fee (e.g. 50 cents each) to reimburse costs. It may be difficult for some students to afford or access these products when they are needed and having these materials available to students for free at school campuses could potentially help them to stay in class and engage in instructional and co-curricular activities.

Purchasing menstrual products for all students will impact the Department's budget. The estimated cost to provide menstrual products (pads only) at schools will be approximately \$1,000,000.00 per year. The Department would opt to not provide

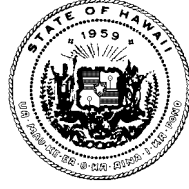
tampons because there is a risk for liability for the following reasons:

1. Potential for the user to not follow all labeled directions in the package and
2. Increased risk for infections such as yeast, fungal, and bacterial (e.g. toxic shock syndrome).

The Department appreciates this proposal and the inclusion of an appropriation, but asks that any additional funding not affect the Department's top budget priorities to restore funds that were reduced as a result of the fiscal fallout from COVID-19 and the funding of existing budget shortfalls that were included in the Department's supplemental budget request. Without those funds, the Department will face severe constraints on its ability to continue to promote equity and access to needed resources and support all students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 4, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Education

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2249 – RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.**

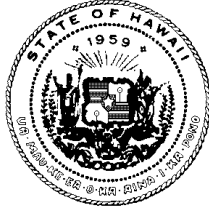
Hearing: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Department of Education.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations.

The department recognizes the barriers individuals face when attempting to access or purchase menstrual and other essential hygiene products. Often, these barriers prevent vulnerable youth from furthering education and inhibit healthy social interactions. Creating ease of access and free menstrual and hygiene products for youth can increase their confidence, educational success, and improve their health and well-being outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



‘O kēia ‘ōlelo hō’ike no ke
Komikina Kūlana Olakino o Nā Wāhine

Testimony on behalf of the
Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women

Prepared for the H. Committees on Education and Economic Development

In Support of HB2249

Dear Chairs Woodson and Quinlan, Vice Chairs, and Honorable Members,

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women writes in **support** of HB2249 which requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. The measure also appropriates money and requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses.

What does gender inequality look like in 2022? For one, interrupted education for women and gender diverse people due to lack of access to period products and societal shame.

Last year, a statewide survey of 361 women and gender non-conforming people found that 42% of respondents stated that lack of access to pads and tampons affected their ability to learn in high school.¹ *Understanding Period Poverty in Hawai‘i* also found resounding support for government responsibility for the provision of period supplies: 93.5% of respondents believe the government should provide free tampons and pads to anyone who needs them.

Accordingly, we ask that the Committee pass this popular and urgent measure for women’s equality and gender justice.

Sincerely,

Khara Jabola-Carolus
Executive Director

¹ <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11.17.21-Understanding-Period-Poverty-in-Hawaii%CA%BBi-Report.pdf>

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2249

February 8, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference

RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 2249 adds a new section to Chapter 302A and Chapter 302D to require the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Public Charter School Commission (Commission) to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. The measure also appropriates an unspecified sum of general funds to the DOE and the Commission in FY 23.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriations in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and

- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 8, 2022

The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Education
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Woodson and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **Supports HB2249**, which requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public-school campuses.

Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) living in a licensed or certified home only receive a \$50 a month personal allowance for their monthly incidental expenditures. Individuals with I/DD who live in these homes must be 18 years or older. However, many of these individuals still attend DoE schooling through the age of 21. The personal allowance these individuals receive has not been increased since 2007. This allowance is for the individual to use on incidental items the individual may need, such as telephone expenses, hobbies, prescription drugs, haircuts, clothing, etc. However, these individuals usually have no money left to spend on most of these items after paying for essential items, shampoo, deodorant, etc.

Females living in these circumstances should not be forced to use this allowance on menstrual products of their choice. We believe this bill is moving our state in the right direction, supporting our individuals that require these menstrual products in their daily lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **supporting HB2249**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 12:55:31 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i (formerly the LGBT Caucus) Hawai'i's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports HB 2249.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai'i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native

Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community

Center

The Catalyst Group

February 6, 2022

To: Representative Justin Woodsoni, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Education

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2249 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

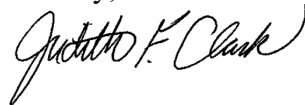
Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality.

Feminine hygiene products are a basic necessity for adolescent girls. For low income students, the cost of feminine hygiene products is a burden. 1 in 5 teens have struggled to afford period products. 84% of teens have either missed or know someone who has missed school due to lack of feminine hygiene products.. In St. Louis, Missouri, 46% of low-income women had to choose between a meal and period products. (freetheperiod.org).

When feminine hygiene supplies are not accessible to students, there are educational, health, and social impacts. Using a pad or tampon for a lengthy period of time can result in strong, unpleasant odors and bleeding through one's clothing. Students may choose to be truant from school to avoid the embarrassment, and the taunts and bullying from their peers. Stale menstrual blood may increase risk of vaginal and urinary track infections.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

Statement Before The
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 PM

Via Videoconference

in consideration of

HB 2249**RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.**

Chair WOODSON, Vice Chair KAPELA, and Members of the House Education Committee

Common Cause Hawaii provides comments in support of HB 2249, which (1) requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses, (2) requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses, and (3) makes an appropriation.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening our representative democracy - one that works for everyone.

Common Cause Hawaii understands that gender and racial equality is a crucial feature of successful democratic societies and effective democratic governments. The lack of adequate access to feminine hygiene products is a form of gender-based exclusion. Menstrual equity is also an issue for marginalized populations, given the costs associated with hygiene products. Our public schools should support women, especially the marginalized, in our system, strengthening democracy for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2249. If you have questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii



'Ilima Intermediate Students with the 2/3 Star-Advertiser Article
[“Bills Seek to Provide Public School Students with Period Products”](#)

February 8, 2022

Committee on Education

Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

My name is [Sarah “Mili” Milianta-Laffin](#) and I teach at 'Ilima Intermediate School in Ewa Beach. **Myself, and my students in the 'Ilima Intermediate Activist Club are writing to you today asking for your support of House Bill 2249** which directs the Hawai'i Department of Education to provide free, quality menstrual products to our Hawai'i public school students. By supporting this bill, you show that you care about providing basic healthcare and safety to public school students in Hawai'i who currently suffer from inadequate access to menstrual products.

My students have been working on bills to end period poverty in our public schools since the 2020 legislative session, and we're grateful that your committee has warmly welcomed students to be civically engaged. A note to the committee, the HIDOE student GMAIL accounts do not

[Testimony of Sarah “Mili” Milianta-Laffin & 'Ilima Intermediate School Activist Club in Favor of HB 2249](#)

allow students to confirm their capitol.hawaii.gov accounts - the confirmation emails are blocked or never arrive. For students to testify, they must use a device at home, or an alternative email address to submit their own testimony. This is often why I share my speaking time with my students - or in the past have submitted their written testimony with mine.

The recent study conducted by the [Ma'i Movement, and the HI State Commission on the Status of Women](#) found that when students lacked access to period supplies, they sometimes use newspaper, diapers, leaves, folder paper, napkins, socks, toilet paper, or old rags in place of clean and safe menstrual supplies. Also, 8 out of 10 students in Hawai'i have faced difficulties getting period products when they need them. This data shocked us, and we hope that the realities of what that study learned, will help our state move forward to correct these gross inequities.

My students and I believe the that voting “yes” on HB 2249 supports the following:

- **Gender Equality:** Lack of access to menstrual products is a form of gender-based oppression. Menstrual products are essential to reproductive health and should be deemed as such.
- **Public Health:** The medical issues facing individuals without access to menstrual products, including preventable infections that can cause susceptibility to cervical cancer and infertility, are life-threatening.
- **Basic Hygiene:** Just as we all expect toilet paper and paper towels to be readily available in public restrooms, we can and should expect the same of menstrual products. Menstruation is a natural occurrence, experienced by over half the population throughout their lives, and should not be treated differently.

HB 2249 recognizes that access to menstrual products is integral to health and safety. For your reference, here are some of the challenges people who cannot access menstrual products face:

- **Medical Consequences:** Lack of access to menstrual products can cause physical infection and disease and can lead to cervical cancer.
- **Civic Consequences:** Students who lack access to menstrual products may choose not to attend school in order to avoid having to use products incorrectly or wear stained articles of clothing in public. People who menstruate deserve to participate fully in public life, and therefore they deserve access to menstrual products.

The journey for menstrual equity in our public schools has been a long but important one. We know that impactful social justice movements require passion and persistence, and we've been so grateful to work with great leaders at the legislature on this issue over the past few sessions, specifically **Representative Amy Perusso** and **Senator Laura Acasio**. Without a doubt,

they've raised the prominence of this issue, and we've been proud to work with them and many other partners to keep our fight moving forward.

You can see this history of period poverty work on Instagram at [@end_period_poverty_hi](https://www.instagram.com/end_period_poverty_hi).

While we've been testifying on these issues for 3 years, our argument remains the same. **Period products are school supplies.** If a student comes to my classroom without a pencil, I give them a pencil. If a student comes to my classroom without menstrual products, I give them those also.

In the absence of government and legislative support, we've had to count on donations from the community, through amazing groups like the [Ma'i Movement](#), [I Support the Girls - Hawaii](#), and [EWAlution 96706](#) to keep our "Menstruation Station" stocked. As a teacher, I've also used DonorsChoose.org to crowd-fund the current supplies we have in this station. Since August 2021, we've given out over 350 free menstrual care packs at our school.



While community care is important, good policy can support community care and educational equity. We urge you to please support this bill.

Mahalo for Reading & Joining Us in Supporting HB 2249,

Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin & The 'Ilima Intermediate School Activist Club

[Testimony of Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin & 'Ilima Intermediate School Activist Club in Favor of HB 2249](#)



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2249

TO: Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Kapela, & Members – House Committee on Education
FROM: Trisha Kajimura
Deputy Director - Community
DATE: February 8, 2022 at 2:00 PM

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** HB 2249 which requires the Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have experienced the direct consequences of the lack of health equity and healthcare access experienced by people struggling with the unforgivingly high cost of living in Hawai'i.

Menstrual hygiene is a public health, gender equality, and human rights issue that was formally recognized by the United Nations in 2014. California, New York, and Virginia currently make menstrual products available to public school students without charge.

Hawai'i's working families have been hit especially hard during the protracted economic downturn precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing levels of housing instability and food insecurity have accompanied job losses and reductions in working hours. Prior to the pandemic DOE determined that almost half of its students were economically disadvantaged.

Young people in need should not have to bear the deep shame and humiliation of not having access to menstrual products that can be readily provided by designated school personnel. To the extent that a lack of access to menstrual products may cause students to miss school for days or even weeks, it frustrates their ability to participate fully in their educational opportunities, including co-curricular activities. Prolonged use of menstrual products is injurious to health and well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744
www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

TO: Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair, Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Education

Representative Sean Quinlan, Chair , Representative Daniel Holt, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Economic Development

FROM: Patricia L. Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (retired)
Breastfeeding Hawaii Treasurer/Board Member

RE: HB2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 2pm

PLACE: Conference Room 309 and Videoconference

Aloha Representative Woodson, Representative Kapela, Members of the Committee on
Education and Representative Quinlan, Representative Holt and Members of the Committee on
Economic Development.

I am Patricia Bilyk, representing Breastfeeding Hawaii. Our Mission is to protect, promote and
support breastfeeding through advocacy, education and collaboration throughout Hawai'i pae
'aina (Our Islands). As such we feel it is part of our Core Values of Kuleana (Responsibility),
Malama (Protect/Take Care of) and Pilina (Connection/Relationship) to be involved and
advocate for people with periods who need our protection as they continue their menstrual life
journey and have need to have menstrual products every month.

Breastfeeding Hawaii is testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2249. No young menstruating
person should be without these products. Being without them causes embarrassment, shame,
absence from school, leading them to use less than hygienic items (leaves, rags, newspaper)
which cause diseases of the reproductive system. This bill addresses this issue and promotes
common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equality.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill and we encourage you to pass it
out of your Committees.



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744
www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia L. Bilyk".

Patricia Bilyk

Breastfeeding Hawaii, Board Treasurer



To: House Committee on Education and Committee on Economic Development
Hearing Date/Time: February 8, 2022 2PM
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2249

Dear Chair Woodson, Chair Quinlan, Vice Chair Kapela, Vice Chair Holt, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2249 which would require the DOE and charter schools to provide hygiene products free of charge to all students. This is an important matter of public health but also of equal access to education.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. UH Hilo, UH Manoa, UH Maui College, and Windward Community College are also AAUW partners. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.

Sincerely,
Younghee Overly
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net



ACOG
The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

*American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Hawai'i, Guam & American Samoa Section*

TO: House Committee on Education
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
House Committee on Economic Development
Representative Sean Quinlan, Chair
Representative Daniel Holt, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 2pm.

FROM: Hawai'i Section, ACOG
Reni Soon, MD, MPH, FACOG, Chair

Re: HB2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality
Position: SUPPORT

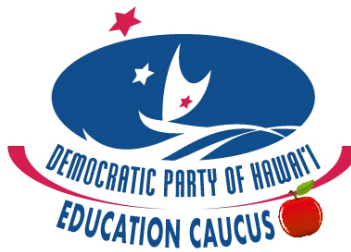
The Hawai'i Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (HI ACOG) supports HB2249 which requests that the Department of Education provide menstrual products free of charge to students on all Hawai'i public school and charter school campuses.

Menstruation is a natural body function that affects half of our population, and menstrual hygiene products can be very costly. Many of Hawai'i's families are struggling right now and having to make difficult decisions about what they can afford. This is a matter of equity. Individuals with inadequate access to menstrual products often are unable to attend school, face discrimination and harassment, and are more likely to have unhygienic practices around menstruation. Ma'i Movement Hawai'i conducted a pilot program in six schools on O'ahu, Maui, Kua'i and Hawai'i island and found a high need for access to menstrual products. In addition, the program found a correlation between lack of access to menstrual products and school absenteeism.

As gynecologists, we have all taken care of adolescents who miss school for a few days every month because of issues around menstruation. We should be doing all we can to keep students in school.

We urge you to pass HB2249.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



HOUSE BILL 2249, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

FEBRUARY 8, 2022 · HOUSE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. JUSTIN H. WOODSON

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports HB 2249, relating to menstrual equity, which requires the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses.

A national study conducted by the University of Richmond found that **students who are unable to afford menstrual products are six times more likely to be absent or late to school, and four times more likely to leave school early.** If we want to increase achievement and decrease chronic absenteeism, then we need to make menstrual products free and readily available in all schools. Moreover, young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are often forced to use unhealthy alternatives to quality menstrual products when their families are unable to afford such products, which can lead to serious health conditions, including toxic shock syndrome. Ensuring access to free menstrual products in spaces frequented by young women, including public schools, is a matter of gender justice, healthcare equity, and human rights.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii
House Committee on Education
Honorable Chair Justin Woodson
Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela
Committee Members

Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00 pm

RE: Support for HB2249 - Requires the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products for free to all students on all campuses

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the Committee,

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i **strongly supports HB2249** requiring the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to make menstrual products for free to all students on all campuses, and also makes appropriations. Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a locally grown organization committed to addressing menstrual inequity and ending period poverty, or the inability to buy and access menstrual products, due to factors including but not limited to financial constraints, lack of education, societal shame or stigma, and inadequate access to a clean facilities to maintain proper hygiene.

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i recognizes the all-encompassing societal challenges inherent in tackling the broader issue of period poverty that disproportionately affects students, low-income and houseless girls and women, trans and gender non-conforming individuals, and those that are incarcerated. We are particularly concerned with [statewide statistics from the DOE](#) that found 47% of students in the DOE system were deemed "economically disadvantaged" in 2019. The [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) also revealed the extent of period poverty and menstrual inequity in the state with nearly 30% of respondents reporting that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining period products, of which cost was the most cited reason.

During the resolution hearings in the 2021 session, it was apparent there were still many unanswered questions about the need, cost, implementation, and potential impact of providing period products free to all students. As a result, we are conducting a statewide pilot, [The Ho'ohanohano Initiative](#), in six schools on O'ahu, Hawai'i island, Maui, and Kaua'i in the 2021-22 academic school year. There are public, charter, Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, ranging from elementary through high school in urban and rural communities. The pilot program aims to increase student access to period products, including but not limited to pads and/or tampons, by distributing them free of charge throughout each campus. During the pilot, we regularly met with administrators, reviewed product utilization, and assessed the impact of free period products on student attendance, performance, and well-being.

The pilot serves approximately 2,353 students and distributed 38,280 period products since the start of the 2021-22 school year in August 2021. The average use is 25 products per student and average cost is \$4-5 per student between August and December 2021. In the midyear assessment, 40% of students reported using the products provided. Although the pilot is still ongoing, we found that product usage was impacted by a number of factors, including but not limited to the percentage of students that qualified for free and reduced lunches, estimated number of students in unstable housing, product access and availability to students, and COVID-related absences. For example, the school with the highest average product use and cost per student is the most geographically isolated school in the pilot with 100% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, and a high number of students in unstable housing. Furthermore, the schools with the highest and lowest average product use per student to date had approximately the same total cost (approximately \$2,000 midyear), but differed in the number of students enrolled, population demographics, and demonstrated need.

Students were encouraged to freely take the number of products they needed at school. There were no reported incidents of excessive use. We are also aware that the cost of menstrual products is not the only barrier or problematic issue facing many individuals who menstruate face every month. A variety of factors contribute to the pain, unnecessary shame, and difficult experiences many are forced to confront when their period arrives. Some individuals who struggle during their period deal with the reality of limited resources, no home, and abusive relationships. Our transgender and nonbinary community also experience trouble, exacerbated feelings of shame, and other nonbinary-related barriers when accessing menstrual products. Therefore, like meal distributions during school breaks, we sought to supply products at school and home by implementing Take Home Kits, which contained an estimated number of period products needed based on the length of the school break.

The procurement and delivery of period products, such as pads and tampons, was carried out by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i through centralized purchasing with a single vendor for cost efficiency. There was no restriction on purchasing period products, such as pads or tampons, but we met with each school to discuss the quantity needed of each product type and monitored or adjusted the amount ordered based on subsequent use. Since period product distribution was no longer cost prohibitive for schools, we encouraged increased access and availability to students in multiple locations throughout their respective campuses. As a result, schools placed period products in locations such as bathrooms, individual stalls, health room, classrooms, main office, counselors' offices, athletic department, and teen center (if applicable), with all schools placing period products in multiple places. Some schools reported a few incidents of product misuse in the bathrooms at the start of the pilot. However, they were able to effectively and quickly mitigate the situation through educating the students and working with the custodial and facilities teams. Since then, there have been no reported incidents or misuse. In fact, faculty are reporting the opposite: *“Allowing menstruating students to care for themselves without shame or stigma during the school day is absolutely important. I can see that reflection in how these students have felt more empowered and confident in the classroom.”* (Middle Charter School, O'ahu)

By allowing students to get free products in multiple locations on campus, the pilot decreased barriers to access and the practice of using unsafe and potentially harmful alternatives, like leaves, folder paper, and

socks, reported at the beginning of the school year. This is unacceptable and we should not tolerate these conditions and environments that could be easily changed. Faculty and students also agreed that embarrassment was the biggest barrier to getting period products, followed by cost and education. The midyear assessment revealed an improvement of 17% - with only 16% of students reporting embarrassment as a barrier compared with 33% at the beginning of the year. Only 27% of students reported they weren't able to get a period product when they needed them at school and the number of faculty that reported witnessing students experiencing difficulties accessing period products dropped from 56% to 1%. One O'ahu high school student commented that *"It was very helpful to have quick access to period products because there were some days where I would unexpectedly get my period and it made me feel more reassured knowing I could go to the health room or teachers classrooms to get the products I need."* An intermediate faculty member on Kaua'i also commented on the impact of the program on non-menstruating students, citing that *"Boys seem to be less sensitized to the occurrence."* The program not only addresses menstrual equity directly related to financial constraints, but also speaks to the broader issue of basic needs for menstruating students and breaks down stigma and systemic barriers.

Absenteeism is one of the most powerful predictors of student success or failure. Chronic absenteeism, or missing 15+ days, is a key priority for Hawai'i public schools. While few students were chronically absent because of their periods, the pilot establishes a clear link between access to period products, absenteeism and education loss. After only one semester of the pilot, students reported missing fewer classes (7% improvement) and fewer school days (9% improvement) with access to period products. At the start of the pilot, one out of four faculty reported students missed at least one school day and one out of two reported they missed class or left school on the pretest survey. Now, 37% reported that having period products helped students to reduce missed classes or absences. As expressed by a Maui Middle School teacher, *"This gives girls the chance to keep coming to school, if these products are available. They don't end up in the health room and can continue coming to class."* Additionally, 29% of faculty observed that providing period products had a positive impact on students' social and emotional well-being.

The data collection shows that needs varied from school to school. From our initial December 2021 report, we estimated an annual cost of \$4-5 per student based on product use at that point in time. While we continue to assess continued costs, based on patterns in ordering and use, we forecast an estimate of \$5-8 per student annually. We will continue to work with the department on finalizing costs as we review product utilization for the duration of the pilot.

We envision distribution to schools by the department to be similar with other mass distribution of products, like PPE or toilet paper and soap, with opportunities for schools to purchase additional products as needed. We modeled our purchasing in the same manner with an initial bulk purchase intended to last the school for two months and ordering on a need basis. With that being said, implementation at each school is critical to the impact of free period products on students. There is currently no clear policy for the provision of period products. Some of our pilot schools and others that we work with reported that period products were allocated in their school budget, but often, many faculty and staff purchased out of their own pocket or through community donations. Consequently, there was also an inconsistent practice of charging students or limiting access. In the best-case scenario, there was no fee levied, but in some cases students paid anywhere from \$0.25-\$1.00 per product. This is not a nominal fee, especially when

taking into consideration the number of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch in our schools. Our state policies and budgets must reflect our state priorities and if left to ambiguity, inconsistent practices such as those aforementioned will happen and our students will continue to be negatively impacted. It is not enough to make appropriations for the purchase of period products.

The bill requires the Department of Education and State Public School Charter Commission to make period products free to all students on their respective campuses to ensure that the safety and health of our students remain a priority. Upon completion of the pilot, we will issue a final report on purchasing and implementation guidelines based on learnings from the schools to serve as a model for other schools. The bill also includes all schools because [a 2021 report by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) found that 26.1% of 361 respondents began menstruating in elementary school.

HB2249 is an initiative that takes steps to end period poverty in Hawai'i and promotes common goals requiring low investment in public health, basic equity, education equity, and gender equality. We urge you to support **HB2249** to help improve the lives of public and charter school students in Hawai'i. We welcome you to contact us with any additional questions you may have.

Mahalo for your leadership and service to Hawai'i!

Aloha,

Nikki-Ann Yee
Co-Founder & President
Ma'i Movement Hawai'i

ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

Parents And Children Together	Boys & Girls Clubs of Maui
Hawaii Foodbank	Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii
ACLU of Hawai'i	Hawai'i Arts Alliance
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Hawai'i Section	Women Helping Women
AAUW of Hawai'i	Pua Mohala Healing & Advocacy Services
Hawaii State Teachers Association	The Pantry by Feeding Hawaii Together
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates	Bay Clinic, Inc.
YWCA O'ahu	Trans Hawai'i Project
Hale Kipa	Princess Ke'elikolani Middle School
Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center	Nest for Families
Community Alliance on Prisons	Malama I Ke Ola Health Center
AF3IRM Hawai'i	UHM Women's Center
Breastfeeding Hawaii	Maui AIDS Foundation
Going Home Hawaii	HHSC Kauai Region
Trillium Birthing Services	Lanai Community Health Center
Keiki Kaukau	Days for Girls International
Zen Den Midwifery	The Pad Project
	Alliance for Period Supplies

CONSTITUENT SUPPORT

As of this submission, 305 individuals signed our petition from all Senate Districts and 48 House Districts. Every single person left their own personal testimony, but it was too many to include here. If you would like to read them and hear what your constituents have to say, please head to maimovement.org/talk-story.

PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL INEQUITY IN HAWAI'I PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Ho'ohanohano Initiative conducted by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a statewide pilot in six schools on O'ahu, Hawai'i island, Maui and Kaua'i. The pilot distributes period products to students and tracks the product usage over time in each school. Pre- and post-surveys of students and faculty are conducted to measure the impact of free period products on student attendance, performance and overall well-being.

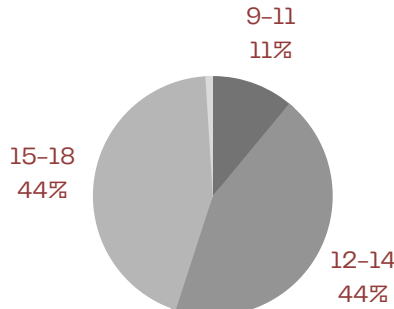


6 SCHOOLS IN THE PILOT

Elementary through high school in urban and rural communities. There are public, charter, Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. 278 faculty and 871 students completed the pre-survey. Additional surveys will be conducted mid-year and end of year.

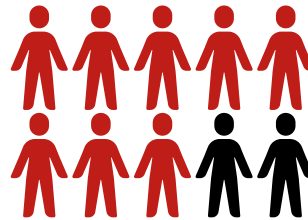
LOW COST INITIATIVE

30,876 products per semester
2,353 estimated menstruators
2.6 period products per month
\$4 - \$5 per student annually



AGES OF STUDENTS

A large proportion of students are Filipino (60%) and/or Native Hawaiian (22%). More than half reported getting their first period by the time the pre-survey was conducted.

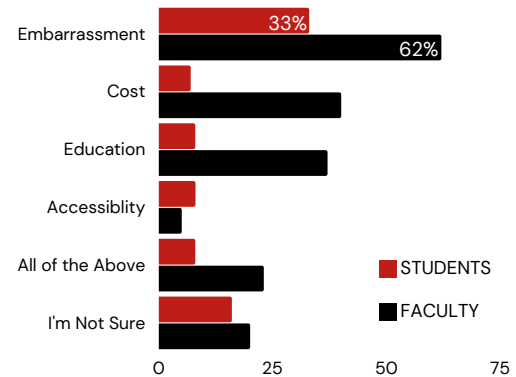


8 / 10 STUDENTS

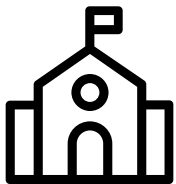
FACE DIFFICULTIES
GETTING PERIOD
PRODUCTS

56% of faculty have witnessed it.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS



Faculty and students agree that embarrassment is the biggest barrier to students. In addition, faculty cite cost and education as major barriers for students to get period products.



ABSENTEEISM & EDUCATION INEQUITY

Absenteeism is one of the most powerful predictors of student success or failure. Chronic absenteeism, or missing 15+ days, is a key priority for Hawai'i public schools. While few students were chronically absent because of their periods, the pilot establishes a clear link between access to period products, absenteeism and education loss.

1 / 4 FACULTY

SAY STUDENTS
MISSED AT LEAST
ONE SCHOOL DAY



13% of students reported missing at least one school day because they lacked access to period products. Of those, 26% missed 3 or more school days in a year.

1 / 2 FACULTY

SAY STUDENTS
MISSED PART OF
THE SCHOOL DAY



22% of students reported missing part of the school day because they lacked access to period products. Of those, 31% missed classes 3 or more days in a year.

WHEN STUDENTS LACKED PERIOD PRODUCTS THEY USED

- NEWSPAPERS
- DIAPERS
- LEAVES
- FOLDER PAPER
- NAPKINS
- SOCKS
- TOILET PAPER
- OLD RAGS

53% OF FACULTY

Are unsure if students receive adequate education about menstruation and how to manage it. Only 8% of faculty said education was adequate, while half of students said it was not.

**"I USED A RED-MAROON JACKET TO HIDE THE LEAKING.
I WANTED TO MISS SCHOOL BUT JUST CARRIED ON WITH MY JACKET."**

- Middle School Student, Kaua'i



95% STUDENTS
91% FACULTY

**SAY YES TO
FREE PERIOD
PRODUCTS IN
SCHOOLS**

**IT'S TIME TO
TAKE ACTION**

↑ MAIMOVEMENT.ORG @MAIMOVEMENTHAWAII



PRIORITIZING PERIOD POVERTY

THE POWER OF ALLEVIATING PERIOD POVERTY IN OUR HAWAII PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Ho'ohanohano Initiative is a pilot program that aims to increase student access to period products, including but not limited to pads and tampons, by distributing them free of charge in six schools on O'ahu, Hawai'i island, Maui, and Kaua'i. There are public, charter, Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, ranging from elementary through high school in urban and rural communities. This impact report reflects midyear data from 237 faculty and 579 students during the 2021-22 school year. We reviewed product utilization and assessed the impact of free period products on student attendance, performance, and overall well-being. [Pre-survey results can be viewed HERE.](#)

OUR GIRLS USED TO HAVE TO PAY FOR THEIR PADS. IF THEY COULDN'T AFFORD IT, THEY WOULD STAY HOME AND USE OTHER THINGS TO TAKE [CARE] OF THEIR PERIOD NEEDS.

THIS PROGRAM IS A BLESSING.

- High School Faculty, O'ahu

COST & USAGE

Served approximately 2,353 students by distributing 38,280 period products since the start of the 2021-22 school year

Average use = 25 products per student*
Average cost = \$4-5 per student*

40% OF STUDENTS USED THE PRODUCTS PROVIDED

*between August and December 2021

PRODUCTS WERE MADE FREE AND AVAILABLE IN

BATHROOMS & STALLS
HEALTH ROOM
COUNSELOR'S OFFICE
CLASSROOMS
MAIN OFFICE
TEEN CENTER
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

DECREASED BARRIERS TO ACCESSING PRODUCTS

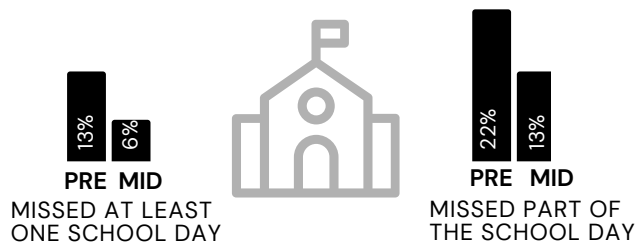
At the beginning of the school year, faculty and students agreed that embarrassment was the biggest barrier to students, followed by cost and education.

17%

Embarrassment as a barrier decreased from 33% to 16%.

IMPROVEMENT

STUDENTS REPORTED MISSING FEWER CLASSES AND SCHOOL DAYS WITH ACCESS TO PRODUCTS



37% of faculty reported that having period products helped students to reduce missed class or absences.

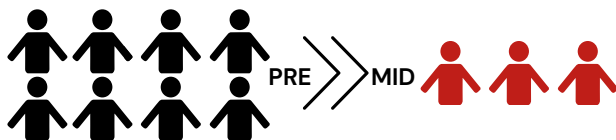
29% of faculty observed providing period products had a positive impact on students' social and emotional well-being.

IT WAS HELPFUL BECAUSE IN ONE OF MY CLASSES, I RANDOMLY GOT MY PERIOD CAUSING ME TO LEAK, PLUS I HAD NO PADS IN MY BAG, BUT THEY BROUGHT ME SOME FROM THE BATHROOM AND IT WAS LITERALLY A LIFE SAVER.

- Middle Charter School Student, O'ahu

7 / 10 STUDENTS PREFERRED PICKING UP PRODUCTS IN THE BATHROOM

Students preferred to pick up free period products in bathrooms (69%), the health room (50%), and classrooms (35%). Faculty preferred students pick up period products in the health room (57%), counselor's office (43%), and equally, bathroom and classrooms (32%).



8 out of 10 students faced difficulties getting period products at the start of the year. At the mid-survey, only 27% reported they weren't able to get period products when they needed them at school.

1%
FACULTY

ONLY 1% OF FACULTY reported witnessing students have difficulty accessing period products, down from 56% at the beginning of the year.

IT WAS VERY HELPFUL BECAUSE NOT EVERY GIRLS CAME TO SCHOOL BEING PREPARED WITH PADS. PADS ARE THE MOST NUMBER ONE IMPORTANT THINGS TO GIRLS, THEY HELP COVER UP FROM BLEEDING THROUGH OUR PANTS.

- High School & Elementary School Student, Hawai'i Island

IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

PASS BILL HB2249 TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS FREE IN ALL PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOLS





Hawaii Women's Coalition

TO: Honorable Chair Justin Woodson
Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela
House Committee on Education

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00 pm

FROM: Hawai'i Women's Coalition

RE: **Support for HB2249** - Requires the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to all students on all Hawaii public and charter school campuses

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela and committee members,

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. Members currently include 29 organizations and agencies (private, public, membership), as well as individuals. The coalition encourages the inclusion of interested parties and in achieving equitable representation.

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition respectfully submits testimony **in strong support of HB2249**. The provision of menstrual products is vital for ensuring the health, dignity, and full participation of students. Research shows that 86% of people who menstruate have started their periods unexpectedly in public, and 34% have needed to leave what they were doing to retrieve period products. Such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, which can be particularly burdensome on youth, 47% of which were already deemed economically disadvantaged by the DOE pre-COVID.

The [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) revealed the extent of period poverty and menstrual inequity in the state with nearly 30% of respondents reporting that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining period products, **of which high cost was the most cited reason**. The impact of inadequate access on education loss was clear in the report with 42% of respondents missing class or leaving school early because they did not have period products. Compared to a [national study commissioned by Always](#), Hawai'i fared worse. In that study, 1 in 5 struggled to get period products and 1 in 5 girls in the US have missed school.

By providing menstrual products in schools, Hawai'i helps ensure its students have equal access to education and are empowered to reach their full potential, irrespective of their gender or economic status. A lack of access to menstrual products is associated with serious health and social issues, including emotional duress, physical infection, and disease. Research also shows that students with



Hawaii Women's Coalition

inadequate menstrual support experience higher rates of absence and are less able to focus and engage in the classroom. Absenteeism can lead to significant performance gaps and is linked to social disengagement, feelings of alienation, and adverse outcomes even into adulthood.

HB2249 is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity in Hawai'i and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equity for girls, and transgender and non-binary people.

For all of these reasons, the Hawai'i Women's Coalition is pleased to support **HB2249**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Hawai'i Women's Coalition

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Representative Justin Woodson, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Representative Sean Quinlan, Chair

Representative Daniel Holt, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 PM

HB 2249 - STRONG SUPPORT FOR MENSTRUAL EQUITY

Aloha Chairs Woodson and Quinlan, Vice Chairs Kapela and Holt and Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the more than 4,100 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety or the corporate vendor on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,113 of Hawai`i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

HB 2249 appropriates funds to the Department of Education for all public schools and public charter schools to provide menstrual products to student.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of this public health measure. The availability of these products is an important step in the direction of public health. We hope that it is coupled with age-appropriate education about hygiene and public health for both girls and boys.

CAP is proud to support the Ma`i Movement and hope that one day these public health products are widely available to all those that need them, especially those in jails and prisons. By making these public health products available, the state is making a strong statement in support of public health.

One thing that COVID has taught us is the importance of everyone's health for the safety of entire communities.

Please pass this measure with a recommendation to FIN to fund it appropriately. Mahalo for this opportunity to share our support for this measure!

TO: Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Rep Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Education

FROM: Leinaala Kanana, Director of Community Health Services
Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

HEARING: Senate Committee Education
Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022 2:00pm, **Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

Submitting Comments re HB2249, Relating to Menstrual Equality

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** for HB2249, which would provide free menstrual products to all Hawaii public school campuses.

Recent studies have shown that about a quarter of menstruating students struggle with access to period products, and that many still feel a stigma around menstruation.

Many schools keep their menstrual products in the nurse's office or at their school-based clinic. This, at times, requires the student to walk across campus while they're still bleeding through. This leads to shame.

The lack of access is even greater for students who come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. These vulnerable students already have barriers to education, health, transportation, etc. Some even come to school in hopes they can find product to last them overnight. Lack of menstrual products also leads to learning loss when students go home because they are unable to find products.

As you know, menstruation isn't a choice and HB2249 allows the opportunity for menstrual products to be available to those who need it the most.

Once again, WCCHC supports this bill, and believes it is a step in the right direction towards removing stigma, shame and learning loss.

Mahalo for your time.

Leinaala Kanana
Director of Community Health Services
Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Osa Tui, Jr.
President
Logan Okita.
Vice President
Lisa Morrison
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: HB 2249– RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Woodson, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support HB2249**, relating to menstrual equality. This bill requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations.

In 2019 New Hampshire's legislature passed legislation, that Governor Chris Sununu signed into law, to provide feminine hygiene products in their secondary public school bathrooms. **We must also move towards providing free feminine hygiene products in secondary school bathrooms.** Again, many states are moving in this direction or have already implemented such legislation.

By providing these products for our middle and high school students we will promote gender equity in our schools as well as ensure that girls from lower income homes do not miss out on their education simply because their families can't afford to buy these products. Additionally, making these products accessible in bathrooms will help prevent the embarrassment girls face of having to try to hide their sanitary pads or tampons to avoid the attention of male classmates while heading to the restroom or the struggle of trying to find a feminine hygiene product from a classmate or teacher when their period comes unexpectedly.

To increase gender equity in our state and schools and to ensure access to feminine hygiene products regardless a student's financial situation, the Hawaii State Teachers Association urges you to **support** this bill.



Bill: House Bill 2249
Title: Relating to Menstrual Equality
Position: SUPPORT
Committee: House Committee on Education
Date: February 8, 2022 2:00pm

Aloha Honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee,

We, the members of the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus, give strong support to HB2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality, requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses. We support this legislation because:

- Ensures all students have access to menstrual hygiene products. This is particularly important for students whose families are struggling financially and have limited means to purchase these products;
- It is a health concern, essentially because people cannot “opt” out of having their periods. This impacts student wellbeing as menstruators are resorting to using leaves, school paper, old rags, diapers, newspapers, and socks when they do not have period products. This opens for the possibility of deadly infections that are PREVENTABLE;
- Reduces the amount of time that students miss school because they do not have access to menstrual hygiene products. A 2021 study by Kotex found that two-thirds of students agree that

too many people have to miss out on valuable school time because they do not have the period products they need;

- It is time to destigmatize the need for menstrual hygiene products. These products are now generally only available in the school nurse's office for a FEE.

This legislation would have a tremendous positive impact on the lives of students experiencing Period Poverty. It will also serve as ho‘omaha for those who have experienced the shame and stigma associated with being caught “unprepared” when their menstrual cycle begins unexpectedly while at school. The Hawai‘i State Women's Caucus strongly urges this committee to pass HB2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Mahalo nui loa!

Vickie Kam, HIDOE Educator

On behalf of the Hawai‘i State Democratic Women’s Caucus



Hawai'i
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawai'i's children

To: Representative Woodson, Chair
Representative Kapela, Vice Chair
House Committee on Education

Re: **HB 2249, Relating to menstrual equity**
3:00 PM, January 28, 2022

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of House bill 2249, relating to menstrual equity.**

As a community, we respond to the basic needs of students. We provide free meals and we have partnerships with community health organizations for dental and vision screenings. It is time we included meeting students' menstrual needs as well. With periods beginning as young as 10, students could face these challenges for the majority of their education.¹ A recent study looked at the impact of period poverty or menstrual inequity has on students in Hawai'i.² Those surveyed reported:

- Missing school and work because they did not have access to period products;
- Feeling social and emotional distress when they don't have the products they need; and
- Almost a quarter of respondents had to prioritize other essential household expenses, like food, over buying period products.

This is an equity issue within our public health and education systems. The lack of access and means has greater consequences for girls and women and girls and women in low-income families. Providing free menstrual products to all students helps reduce the barrier to accessing the education we all value.

For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support this measure.

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy

¹ American Academy of Pediatrics, Physical Development in Girls: What to Expect During Puberty, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/puberty/Pages/Physical-Development-Girls-What-to-Expect.aspx>

² Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, 2020, *Understanding period poverty in Hawai'i*, <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/11.17.21-Understanding-Period-Poverty-in-Hawai%CA%BBi-Report.pdf>

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:55:27 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elise Carmody	Soroptimist of Central Oahu	Support	No

Comments:

We give out Band-Aids in schools, why not menstrual products?

Soroptimist International of Central Oahu supports SB2249 bill to make period products free in ALL public and charter schools. Our organization has been supporting this issue for many years. In 2020 we recognized Moani Olaso, President of Support the Girls Hawaii for her work in providing menstrual products to schools and bras to homeless women.

Since then, the awareness of this issue has grown, and we hope legislators will finally recognize the importance of providing this support to young women who either cannot afford menstrual products or just don't have them when needed. The embarrassment of bleeding through your clothes can be devastating to a young girl and could be avoided if these products were available in school where they spend much of their time.

Please support this legislation. We give out Band-Aids in schools, why not menstrual products? It is about time that menstruation is acknowledged as a normal, healthy part of life for all women, who are half of the population!

Thank You for your consideration.

Elise Carmody, President/Soroptimist International of Central Oahu



February 7, 2022

The Honorable Justin Woodson
Chair, House Committee on Education
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 405
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: HB 2249 – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Woodson:

The Alliance for Period Supplies is proud to support House Bill 2249, which would increase access to menstrual products in all public schools and state public charter schools.

The Alliance for Period Supplies is comprised of over 120 independent nonprofit organizations across 37 states and Washington, D.C. that collect, warehouse, and distribute period products to those in need.

The provision of menstrual products is vital for ensuring the health, dignity, and full participation of all Hawaiians in public life. Nearly [one in four students](#) missed class due to a lack of access to menstrual products, and [one in five reported](#) not being able to afford the products they needed. Research also shows that 86% of people who menstruate have started their periods unexpectedly in public, and 34% have needed to leave what they were doing to retrieve period products. Such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, which can be particularly burdensome on youth, low-income people, unhoused people, and other vulnerable populations.

In addition to resource costs, a lack of access to menstrual products can also cause serious health issues, including emotional duress, physical infection, and disease. Inadequate menstrual support is also associated with other health and psycho-social issues, particularly among low-income people. In addressing these issues, HB 2249 promotes gender equity for girls, women, and transgender and non-binary people and helps ensure the health, safety, and dignity of the many Hawaiians who access public buildings in the course of participating in civic life.

By providing menstrual products in schools, Hawaii helps ensure its students have equal access to education and are empowered to reach their full potential, irrespective of their gender or economic status. Research shows that students lacking access to menstrual products experience



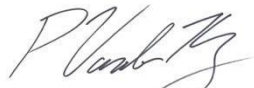
155 East Street, Suite 101 • New Haven, CT 06511 • 203.821.7348 • allianceforperiodsupplies.org



higher rates of absence and are less able to focus and engage in the classroom. Significantly, after New York City passed a law providing free menstrual products to students, participating schools saw a 2.4% increase in attendance.

HB 2249 is a critical step toward removing barriers to equity for all Hawaiians who menstruate, especially those who have struggled to access menstrual products due to gender or income. For all of these reasons, Alliance for Period Supplies ask for your signature on this important legislation that would continue Hawaiians national leadership and support the success and wellbeing of all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Vander Klay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a stylized "V".

Phillip Vander Klay
Alliance for Period Supplies



February 7, 2022

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Education

Re: H.B. 2249, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

Hearing: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00 p.m., Room 309 (videoconference)

Dear Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee on Education:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“HWL”) **supports H.B. 2249**, which requires the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public school campuses; and makes appropriations.

The mission of Hawaii Women Lawyers is to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

Menstruation is a natural and inescapable experience for women and girls. However, this normal bodily function can create numerous challenges, raising not only health and hygiene issues, but also social and human rights issues, especially for those who lack access to adequate menstrual products. Students may be forced to use items that are not sufficient, safe or sanitary to manage their menstrual hygiene or they may make the decision not to attend school at all when they are unable to access supplies.

Providing menstrual products in Hawaii schools ensures that students have access to critical health and hygiene resources that will allow them to have equal access to education regardless of their gender or economic status.

H.B. 2249 recognizes the importance of access to basic needs and its impact on gender and education equity; and HWL supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

Papa Ola Lōkahi

894 Queen Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ Facsimile: 808.597.6551

House Committee on Education

Representative Justin Woodson

Representative Jeanne Kapela

Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00PM, Videoconference

RE: HB2249 – Relating to Menstrual Equity

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee on Education,

Papa Ola Lōkahi **supports** HB 2249. This measure takes action to end “period poverty” – the systematic lack of access to menstrual supplies, such as pads and tampons – by providing funding so that free menstrual products are available in all public and charter schools. Data to support this bill were published in a 2021 report, “[Understanding Period Poverty in Hawai‘i](#),” which found that the most common barrier to access menstrual products is cost; 21.6% of respondents reported missing a full day of school or work due to lack of access. Period poverty disallows individuals who menstruate from full participation in society, which can be seen in metrics such as absenteeism in schools. Papa Ola Lōkahi supports efforts to achieve health equity, which includes increasing access to health resources.

29.5% of those who responded to the “Understanding Period Poverty in Hawai‘i” survey identified as Native Hawaiian, which may indicate that Native Hawaiians face disproportionate impacts of period poverty. The components in this measure would allow the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to address period poverty as a vehicle to increase educational and gender equity and ultimately contribute to public health. The scope of these efforts would also ensure students in rural communities, who may have fewer options to access to menstrual products regardless of cost barriers, have an additional resource.

Data from 2015-2019 from [Hawai‘i Health Matters](#) found that Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) are overrepresented among people living in poverty within Hawai‘i, representing 16% of families living below poverty level, with 28.7% of NHPI children living below poverty level. This data also shows that 12.1% of children living below poverty level are assigned female at birth, and 10.9% are aged 12-17, the age range that menstruation begins and occurs regularly. It is important to note that since this data is pre-pandemic, it is likely these statistics have increased due to the pandemic and economic recession. It is important that our State continue to examine multiple means to achieve increased access to health resources, as well as health equity. Passing this measure will be one step in that direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important legislation.

About Papa Ola Lōkahi

Papa Ola Lōkahi holds the mission of improving the health status and well-being of Native Hawaiians and others by advocating for, initiating, and maintaining culturally appropriate strategic actions aimed at improving the physical, mental, and spiritual health of Native Hawaiians and their ‘ohana, and empowering them to determine their own destinies. This mission works towards Papa Ola Lōkahi’s vision of a thriving Native community of health individuals, families, and communities who are informed about their rich heritage and culture living in a state of lōkahi (unity) and making informed choices and responsible decisions in a safe island society that is pono (in proper order). Created through the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, Papa Ola Lōkahi is the designated organization charged with a variety of mandates, which include coordinating, implementing, and updating a Native Hawaiian comprehensive health care master plan; leading the five Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems; and housing the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program.

Papa Ola Lokahi

is a non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and continental United States.

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Sheri-Ann Daniels, EdD



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. School Street u Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819 u tel: 808-791-9400 u fax:
808-848-0979 u

www.kkv.net

Dear legislators,

I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I have worked as a reproductive health educator and community health worker in the Kalihi elementary, Junior high and high schools. This year we were asked to provide education specifically to elementary and junior high girls on the topics of menstruation, cleanliness, discretion and culture. We learned that many students do not have access to menstrual products and have not received any education or support at home because parents are overworked and do not have the time and resources to provide education themselves. During these classes, students were engaged with many questions surrounding their bodies, what getting their menstrual period means and what to do when you get it. We spent a lot of time addressing negative stigma and embarrassment. Part of what makes this embarrassing for youth is their lack of ability to care for themselves because they do not have the products they need.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.





TO: Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 8, 2022; 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 309/Video Conference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2249 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

We support HB 2249 which requires the Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students on all public and charter school campuses and makes appropriations.

Pre-pandemic, in 2019-2020 roughly 47% of DOE students were considered economically challenged. It is estimated that the pandemic has pushed 60% of local households to struggle meeting basic needs. In a recent statewide survey conducted, 80% of students surveyed faced difficulties getting period products and 50% of faculty members reported students missing at least part of a school day due to lack of access to period products. People living in poverty are most affected by lack of access to period products. These individuals often cannot afford sufficient period products and so disproportionately suffer the medical and psychological impact of reusing products, using products for longer than indicated, not using any products, or resorting to other unsafe or unsanitary materials as a replacement for period products. Lack of access causes shame, embarrassment and, at times, even missing school.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to under-resourced families. Assisting more than 17,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 20 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community strengthening programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding **HB 2249**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ♦ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ♦ TEL: 808-791-9400 ♦ FAX: 808-848-0979 ♦

www.kkv.net

Testimony in Strong Support of HB2249 - Relating to Menstrual Equality

*Menstrual Equity; Menstrual Products; Department of Education; Public Schools; State Public Charter School Commission; Charter Schools; Appropriation (\$)
Committee on Education and Finance February 8, 2022, 2 p.m.*

To: Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair and Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
From: Aprilei T.T. Ramirez, MPH/ Kōkua Kalihi Valley (KKV) Comprehensive Family Services
Subject: Menstrual Equality

To whom it may concern,

I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I have experienced and witnessed the need for young girls to access period products as early as 4th grade. As a community health worker, providing education on menstruation among public schools in Kalihi has helped our Family Planning program see a need for period product education and the overall need for period products that many of the young women may only have access to while in school through programs like Ma'i Movement Hawaii.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Aprilei T.T. Ramirez, MPH
2239 N. School Street
Honolulu HI 96819
aramirez@kkv.net/808-721-2055

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 12:31:56 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support HB2249 so all females in school have equal access to menstrual products.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 12:45:25 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Robbie Melton	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chairs Quinlan and Woodson and committee members,

I fully support HB2249, providing access to the necessary hygiene supplies for young ladies in the schools. It is appalling that many young women must miss their education because they cannot afford the products needed to keep them healthy and active.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony,

Sincerely,

Robbie Melton

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 1:18:55 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jennifer Masutani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB2249. Menstrual products are essential and should be considered a right, not a luxury. We need to address the issue of menstrual inequity in Hawai'i.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 5:44:24 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jen Jenkins	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB2249.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 6:31:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Angelina Summer Robinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Angelina and I am a resident of Waipahu. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have believe that access to menstrual products is necessary- No child should suffer the shame or stress of being unable to have access to these products. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 8:21:48 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nicelle Herron	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Nicci and I am a resident of Kailua-Kona. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I believe that every menstrating female should have access to feminine products. When I was growing up, there was a lot of stigma and shame around periods, especially while in middle school. This is a bodliy function that we cannot control and when you're young and just getting used to this new part of your life it can be very odd and embarrassing. Thankfully some of that stigma has eased a bit but, not for those who don't have access to feminine care products. I have heard too many stories of young women skipping school because they don't have access to feminine care products and are too embarrassed. This has got to stop. This is so harmful and damaging for female and adolescent development and maturity and it creates unequal opportunities for women. I believe that by passing this bill and giving access to those who need these products most, you will help provide a safe and equal environment for young women. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 9:48:06 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Edith Ignacio Neumiller	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a 36 year resident of Kauai, I am testifying in support of HB2249. I know that elementary girls who start their period at ages of 9, 10 & 11 in schools would need free period products available in the rest rooms or in the school health rooms. There should be no shame to start periods for young girls especially who can't afford these products.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this bill.

Edie Ignacio Neumiller

Kauai Commissioner

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 11:44:07 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and EDN Committee Members,

I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have young nieces in the Hawai'i school system. I want to ensure that they thrive without having to worry about basic health needs such as menstrual products.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home.

The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Warmly,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 12:41:13 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Melissa W. Chong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Melissa W.Chong, Kihei Maui Resident

First, I would like to thank the Education Committee for hearing this bill. I write in **strong support** of HB 2249 asking the Dept of Education to provide free period products on all public and charter campuses. I feel passionate about supporting this measure and I know how imperative it is to address the issue of period poverty, especially how it effects our youth. Providing products at schools and eliminating even one angle of period poverty will help bring us as a community a step closer to closing the gender inequalities gap. It has been shown in many states including on surveys in the state of Hawaii, taken across islands, that almost 1/2 of menstruating students have missed multiple days of school due to lack of resourses and product to manage their menstrual cycles. Even more have left school repeatedly (cycles happen every single month!) because of accidents or to acquire products from home, even more still yet miss or leave school from feeling embarrassed or ashmaed. This in and of itself means menstruating students, females, will be at an academic disadvantage, simply because of a normal biological process of being female. We can help this.

This bill is important to address and remedy this inequality. Secondly, schools are expected, and do, provide products for basic hygeine and normal bodily functions, such as toilet paper, bandaides, soap etc... considering about half of the students at any school are in need of period products every three weeks or so, this is a huge need that is being overlooked. I said "need" not "want". These are basic needs.

As females, menstruating people, we have all had an embarrassing moment when we've had to use something other than an approved product and had a problem. Its not isolated. I lived through having my make shift roll of toilet paper 'pad' tumble out of my pant leg in the hallway between classes in high school. Talk about wanting to disappear... But, I made due as many girls still do. I cannot imagine the possible repercussions someone experiences now with social media and a camera in everyone's hand!

Access to Education on this subject, is paramount. students, teachers, and parents. This movement starts the conversation. Thank you for giving me time to share my story. I respectfully ask you to support HB 2249 and take the first steps to end period poverty on campuses statewide.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 4:42:53 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tamara Swift	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

For many girls and women feminine hygiene is an unfair burden that society refuses to accommodate. Making sure that schools are equipped to provide this basic care is essential for girls well being.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 9:06:46 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Patricia Mcmanaman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support HB 2249.

Thank you,

Pat McManaman

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 6:09:23 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jaime Stevens, MD, MPH	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Jaime Stevens, MD, MPH
1177 Queen St. #2707 Honolulu, HI, 96814

February 6, 2022

Hawai'i State Legislature Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2249

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist on O'ahu writing in support of this initiative to end period poverty in Hawai'i. I encourage you to support this bill as lack of access to menstrual products to those in school can result in not only inadequate educational opportunity, but also psychological trauma and preventable medical conditions that can be serious and even life threatening.

As a majority of Hawai'ian families have reported concern about their ability to purchase menstrual products in the pandemic, I urge we join the 21 other states that have passed or are proposing this year to provide products in schools, an action that studies show has increased school attendance, and is likely to prevent health complications.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration in protecting the health and welfare of all of your constituents.

Jaime Stevens, MD, MPH, FAPA

April 6, 2021

To: House Committee on Education
Representative Justin Woodson, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

I am testifying in support of this resolution as I have witnessed the utter tragedy and shame that many of our homeless and low-income female students and families experience by having to go without feminine hygiene pads as for the families I work with, these items are considered “luxury” items. Some students have even been “scolded” for using the restroom during work/class time to make home-made pads out of wadded toilet paper. Some students have also missed school due to having periods and are embarrassed to go to school due to having no access to pads.

Schools do what they can, but the majority do not have enough. I am grateful for organizations such as the Salvation Army and the local Hilo High and Waiakea High Key Club for stepping up and donating feminine pads for our many needy young female youth/teens in homeless and economically distressed living situations. Most recently, the Mai Project has donated, but there still are not enough pads to meet the needs of all our needy female youth/teens.

We recently passed out over 200 pads to Kau High and Pahala Elementary which has over 165 homeless youth of which over half are young female teens. Families are extremely grateful and they expressed to me and school staff that the pads are a greater necessity than even hand sanitizers and PPE. Even prior to the pandemic, nearly all schools requested hygiene pads as a higher priority than even school supplies as this is something under the radar for most organizations that donate to schools.

Please help solve this problem for our most vulnerable and needy youth as these items are needed, but our kids will not come up to ask for these. Help save the dignity, self-esteem and confidence of our young female/teens in Hawaii so they can better learn and thrive in our community.

Respectfully,

Courtney Hamakawa
DOE- East Hawaii Community Homeless Concerns Liaison

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 11:28:42 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Christina Torres	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Christina Torres. I'm an eighth-grade English teacher currently completing my 10th year in the classroom. As someone who works with adolescents and as an educator committed to equity, I strongly support the bill to make menstrual products available to our students.

Menstrual products are not simply a woman's issue or even a "hygiene" issue, but are a health and safety issue. Not having access to clean, quality menstrual products increases not only the likelihood of infections but the likelihood of cervical cancer for those experiencing their menstrual cycles. Forcing students to use old, soiled products or use "improvised" methods such as toilet paper, newspaper, or tissue and expecting them to continue to sit and learn is a frankly barbaric practice, and avoiding that means that some students will stay home rather than deal with the pain and stress of not having enough products. A study by [the Ma'i Movement](#) showed that 42% of responding students in Hawai'i reported leaving early or missing class due to lack of access to menstrual products. This is something that we can help erase by funding access to quality resources for our students.

Menstrual products are, unfortunately, still detrimentally expensive, thus increasing the likelihood that students coming from economically stressed backgrounds will struggle to obtain the proper menstrual products they need in order to stay healthy. A recent study showed that 25% of students struggle to afford menstrual products (via [Forbes](#)). Beyond the health factors raised in this bill, providing support will help ensure that students who experience their menstrual cycles have the resources they need to stay in school and learn to the best of their ability. Just as we provide meals or other supplies to our students in need, we should also provide menstrual products for our students as well.

Fortunately, other states are already doing this and beginning to pave the way for this work. Recently, California mandated that schools and colleges provide free pads, tampons, and other products in their restrooms (via [NPR](#)). We can learn from the amazing progress that this and other states are making in supporting their students and show that Hawai'i is equally supportive of its children.

I urge you to support HB2249 to help improve the lives of students in Hawai'i. Please contact me with any additional questions you may have.

With aloha,

Christina Torres

christinaetorres@gmail.com

February 6, 2022

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and
Members of the Committee,

I am a teacher, parent, and community member from
Honolulu who is a proud supporter of HB2249:
Relating to Menstrual Equality.



No matter what gender we are, I think we can all
relate to the horror and anguish of an embarrassing
shi shi stain. We quickly look for the nearest book to
cover our okole or a jacket to tie around our waist. If we sit on a water puddle on a
bench, we are so quick to point out, "I promise it's only water, not shi shi! Take that
embarrassed feeling and relate it to a bright red spot on your bottom from a leaking
period. Bright, glowing red can easily be spotted far, far away. As shi shi dries clear, a
bright red period spot dries into a dark reddish brown crust that takes massive effort to
eventually remove.

I asked my daughter if her period ever leaked in middle or high school. She replied,
"many times." I asked what did you do? She said she would "wrap a jacket on my waist".
Hmm, I don't think everyone has the foresight to bring an extra jacket to school to hide
a stain and potentially get stained too.

Periods are finicky. Though periods claim to be monthly, my own experience was very
irregular. Sometimes light, sometimes heavy, and very unpredictable on which day of
the month it would be an uninvited guest on my schedule.

A 2021 survey conducted by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and
Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that: "42% of respondents reported missing class or
leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. 22% of the
respondents missed the school day entirely, due to the lack of period products, and of
those who missed school completely, 12% missed 3-5 school days and 6% missed 6-10
days of school from the entire academic year." This study and others show the stark
complexities of period problems. Our female youth are already challenged with enough
adversities in middle and high school. Helping to provide period products will help
alleviate a big worry for young ladies and help them focus on their future aspirations.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celeste Yukiko Endo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Celeste Yukiko Endo

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 2:43:54 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Colleen Inouye	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Representative Woodson and the Committee on Education and Chair Representative Quinlan and the Committee on Economic Development,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of HB2249 which requires the DOE and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products free of charge to students. Education should not be stifled by students worrying about how they will buy hygiene products at school, especially when that may occur unexpectedly. Economic and access inequities need to be decreased for students to learn.

Please support HB2249 and thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of the bill.

Sincerely,

Colleen F Inouye MD MMM MS-PopH FACHE FAAPL FACOG

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 3:17:51 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Danielle Sato	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I, Danielle Sato, am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have believe that health is a human right, and menstrual health is an essential component of people's overall well-being. This bill is just one step we can take to end menstrual inequity, as well as period poverty in Hawaii and beyond. A 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported **missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products**. This negative pipeline only furthers inequities along gender, sex, racial, and class-based lines in our schools and in the workplace. No person should have to lose out on their education for the easily fixable reason of inadequate access to menstrual products. The bill addresses this issue head on and rightfully promotes public health, gender equality, and education equity for all of Hawaii.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 3:40:45 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha members of the House Committee on Education,

I strongly support HB 2249. No menstruator should ever have to go without period products due to their lack of financial resources. DOE and public charter schools should be safe and nurturing establishments that provide youth with such products to prevent bullying, shame, and embarrassment as well as serious negative health and mental health impacts for years to come.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony in support of HB2249

I'm writing in support of HB2249, relating to menstrual equality. Sanitary products are not inexpensive. By providing tampons and pads within the school systems at no cost, we will help kids attend school when they might otherwise stay home when they have their periods. This is not only educationally important, but is also a kind thing to do. Periods are often unpredictable, especially when kids are young. Therefore, students can't always come to school prepared.

Let's just do the thoughtful thing. Pass this bill and help out kids. We can afford it and they deserve it.

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 4:53:25 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lorna Takehara Strand	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo for HB2249. Young women in our schools are often caught in the bind of families needing to spend their monthly income on food and other necessities to survive. So feminine hygiene products often fall to the bottom of the shopping list. Add to this the fact that all of these products are imported and subject to high shipping costs, and the need becomes even greater. It's a travesty that young women choose to be absent from school during their high period days because they don't want to be shamed in class and simply don't have the funds to buy a tampon or pad. This bill will give equal access to products for our girls so that they can participate in school, sports events, and all the activities that school has to offer.

When Oahu Democrats co-sponsored a Martin Luther King Day of Service this year, we provided drop-off opportunities for the Hawaii Foodbank and the Mai Movement. We collected 1.74 Tons of food and carloads of feminine hygiene products for Mai Movement. We realized then that there is a very strong awareness by all sectors of our island about the need, not only for food for families in need, but for period products for our young women as well.

Please pass HB22489

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 6:45:30 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michele Yamada Pangilinan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am an OBGYN on Oahu and primarily care for women from Federally Qualified Health Centers including Kalihi Palama Health Center, Waikiki Health, Wahiawa Health Center, and the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Centers. Many of these women struggle with meeting basic needs including housing, food security, health insurance coverage, etc. Menstrual products are expensive and families often have to forgo purchasing them to afford rent, food, electricity, etc. The devastating effect of this is that female children of these families are not able to attend school during their menses which last approximately 7 days out of every month, cumulatively resulting in these women missing months of school. This is not only detrimental to learning, but damaging to their self esteem and self confidence. Providing these products without cost at schools would allow young women from disadvantaged backgrounds to reach their full academic potential as equals to their peers without such biological or social circumstances.

I strongly support this bill as a matter of equity.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Michele Pangilinan, MD

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:33:13 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Katrina Karl	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I believe all students should have access to free menstrual products. Since the organization Ma'i Movement has helped to provide a few areas at our school where students can obtain free menstrual products, we have clearly seen a need, with the stations requiringrefilling at least once a month. There are students at our school, and surely all others, who do not have access to, cannot afford, or are simply caught unprepared with menstrual products on any given day. Our schools can help afford them access to the hygiene and dignity that everyone deserves. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Katrina Karl

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:34:48 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kevin Argueta	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Justin Woodson, Vice Chair Jeanné Kapela and Members of the Education Committee.

My name is Kevin Argueta and I work at Kahakai Elementary School and am a resident of Honaunau, District 5. I am testifying in support of HB2249 bill because I believe it is a fundamental right that our students have access to these resources. From data collected by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women report, "Understanding Period Poverty in Hawaii Report," it is clear that this is an issue affecting our communities, specifically our most vulnerable and rural communities like the one I work and reside.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support for this bill.

Mahalo,

Kevin Argueta

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:37:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brandy-Lee Yee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Brandy and I am testifying in **SUPPORT** of bill **HB2249**. This bill is very important to me. I believe that menstrators in all schools across Hawaii should have access to period products. No student should miss school or stress out over having their period during school. Not all students come from families that can afford period products in the home. For some students school is a save haven for them. Having products for students is another way students will feel cared about and safe. Lets end the stigma and shame! !! lets normalize periods!! Lets show our students the ALOHA spirit!!

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support for this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:39:28 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support for HB2249 which aims to provide students with free menstrual products and an end to period poverty within our school systems in Hawai‘i. Mahalo

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:41:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
lani nakajo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because I believe no one should not have access to menstrual products. I cannot imagine what it would be like to have my menstrual cycle at school without being able to afford menstrual products. Please consider this important bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 7:45:40 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michele Baldovi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 6, 2022

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Michele Baldovi and I am writing in strong support of bill HB2249 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses. I have been a school counselor for 29 years in Hawaii's public schools, 27 spent at the middle school and the last 2 at an elementary school. Sadly, the concerns are not much different.

- Just this past month, a 4th grader came into the health room because she had just started her period and didn't have any supplies with her. We looked through the cabinets and could not find a single pad until we checked the first aid kit used by teachers on field trips! Yes. That is where it was and who knows how long that sanctuary napkin had been in there?!?!?! I asked our health aide about supplies and she was told the school had to buy it. How much time did this girl spend out of class? 15 minutes, most of the time because we were looking for supplies.**
- While working at the middle school, I purchased supplies with my own money to keep in my office. I was closer in proximity to the students and they didn't have to waste time walking to the health room which was across campus (5 minute walk each way, adding 5-10- minutes for the time it takes to take care of themselves) equates to 15-20 minutes of missed classroom time! Multiply that by 5 days a week and that is a lot of missed time. Many of the students don't have access to supplies at home and some have told me they don't want to ask their parents for it.**

- **Ideally, it would be great for each classroom to have a small supply in their rooms, but I would settle for free supplies to our students and schools! Access to free menstruation supplies (not just pads, but the bags to dispose of used hygiene items) is key to helping our students not only stay in school and class, but feel confident in themselves to manage their own hygiene needs and not feel embarrassed , but student absences because of a lack of access to period products**

Why is this bill important?

- **Period products are health hygiene products. Menstruation is a bodily function that is just as important as other bodily functions. People with periods cannot simply “opt out” of having their periods.**
- **Student well-being is at risk. Students surveyed reported using leaves, school paper, diapers, old rags, newspaper, and socks when they do not have period products. These items are not sanitary, and using them opens up the possibility of (possibly lethal) infection that is preventable!**
- **Menstrual inequity leads to educational inequity. Students report missing classes or even entire school days due to a lack of access to period products on campus.**

I strongly urge this committee to pass bill HB2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo nui loa!

Michele Baldovi, M.Ed, NBCT

February 6, 2022

Aloha Honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Sarah Kern and I am a 7th grade science teacher at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School (CKMS). I am writing in strong support of bill HB2249 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

As a public school teacher in my 9th year (5 years on Oahu at Waianae High School and 4 years here on Kauai), I have seen first hand the ways that inadequate access to menstrual products negatively affects students. Each year, I have provided students with period products which I have personally supplied in my classroom. On several occasions I have had students who miss class, and then tell me upon returning to school that they were absent due to their time of the month. I can only guess at how many students missed class for the same reason but didn't feel comfortable enough to tell me. Some of our health rooms across the state do have a stock of period products that they can distribute to students, but this is not nearly enough. Students should not have to ask for these products, pay for these products, or walk across campus to get these products when they are in need. I'm not sure how many of you have been to Waianae High School's campus, but it's pretty spread out. Walking from a 9th grade classroom to the health room and then to a bathroom could easily take 7-8 minutes. Seven minutes may not seem like a lot, but it is an excruciating amount of time to be a teenager walking around in the open, potentially bleeding through your clothes. Let's prevent all DOE students from ever having to face a situation like this in the future.

Just last year while on recess duty, I came across a former student sitting on a bench sobbing uncontrollably. When I asked her what happened, she said she leaked through her pants and had nothing to use. She was too embarrassed to even stand up to walk to the health room to ask for a pad. I am fortunate to have a male colleague thoughtful enough to keep a few extra jackets in his room for situations like hers, so we were able to give her a jacket to borrow so that she could walk to the office and call her parents. However, this student should never have been in such a position in the first place, and I hope that none of our DOE students will ever be in such a position in the future. CKMS is so fortunate to have been selected as a pilot school for Ma'i Movement's Ho'ohanohano Initiative which has provided us with period products this year at no cost to students. Since the implementation of the pilot program, we have had students share verbal and written appreciation for the products, and I have spoken with several high school students who are jealous of the program. Students at CKMS no longer feel ashamed or embarrassed to ask for products because they are accessible in the stalls of our girls' bathrooms. Students at CKMS no longer have to use wads of uncomfortable toilet paper/paper towels (or worse) to make it through the day. Students at CKMS no longer have to miss excessive amounts of class walking to the health room, then walking to the bathroom, and then walking back to class. As the pandemic has reminded us all, every minute of in-person classroom instructional time is precious. I am asking for you to give all of our students the opportunities that my CKMS students have had this year, and ensure that they have access to the products that they need.

Period products are health hygiene products. Menstruation is a bodily function that is just as important as any other bodily function. People who menstruate cannot simply "opt out" of having their periods. The DOE does not bat an eye when it comes to buying extra masks, paper towels, hand sanitizer, etc. for students to use to prevent the spread of COVID 19 because it is the humane thing to do. The DOE supplies soap, toilet paper, and paper towels to its bathrooms (and continues to stock them when vandalism or theft occurs) because it is the humane thing to do. The DOE provides me with a supply of band aids in my classroom to use if a student is bleeding from a cut because it is the humane thing to do. Yet when the blood is from another source, a source that the student has no control over, the DOE does not make the humane choice. The State of Hawaii can do better, and the children of Hawaii deserve better.

If this bill is not passed and we continue with the status quo, student well-being is at risk. Families should not have to make the choice between buying groceries and buying period products, but the reality is that they do, and food on the table is going to win over pads for a teenager every time. Students surveyed in the Ho'ohanohano Initiative reported using leaves, school paper, diapers, old rags, newspaper, and socks when they do not have access to period products. These items are not sanitary, and using them opens up the possibility of (sometimes lethal) infection that is preventable! All we need to do to prevent those infections is to get these products into the hands of the students, many of whom are in desperate need.

I strongly urge this committee to pass bill HB2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. If this bill is passed, we will be one step closer to ending the stigma that plagues menstruators. We will be ensuring that students are not missing one minute of instruction that they don't need to. We will be progressing toward a more inclusive and equitable education system. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo nui loa,
Sarah Kern

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 8:00:30 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lauren Ing, MD	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Girls in school deserve to have access to menstrual and hygiene products in school. Many families have trouble affording these products or may not always have them readily available. As a physician and a women, I know that sometimes periods can come unexpectedly and without having extra menstrual products with you or having a friend with some, then it can make the school day very uncomfortable and stressful. By providing these products, we can support girls and help them focus more on education and learning while they are in school and not worry about making it through the day without enough period products.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:16:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jo-Ann M Adams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Not only do I support this bill, I think it is embarrassing that this even has to be legislated. I would think that these supplies would have been provided based on common decency without the need for legislation. However, if legislation is needed, pass it.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:26:17 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stacey Moniz	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha and thank you so much for scheduling this hearing to support young women who need our support.

I stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this important legislation that will provide period products at schools for free. Every woman can remember a time when we were in school where access to period products was a **VERY** important concern. I had never heard the term, "period poverty" but once I did, I immediately understood the concept and wanted to make sure that students need not stress for lack of period supplies.

Please take a strong stand in support of young women across the state and support this important legislation!

Mahalo nui for your time and service.

Peace and love,
Stacey Moniz

February 7, 2022

Aloha members of the Committee,

My name is Zamantha Zamora, and I am a graduate student in the Masters of Social Work program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I was not born and raised in Hawaii; however, I was born and raised on a small island in the Pacific Ocean, Guam, testifying in support of **House Bill No. 2249**, “Relating to Menstrual Equality.”

I highly support this bill to help break the stigma of menstruation and bridge the gap in gender inequality and period poverty. First and foremost, the cost of menstrual products is insanely costly. Almost every year or every decade, the cost of these products is unbelievably increasing as prices continue to go up. Middle to low-income families struggle to purchase sanitary and hygiene products to support their menstrual health for themselves and their children. Additionally, as the prices of these products increase, it feels like a drag race for the middle to low-income families to catch up to afford these sanitary products that they desperately need for the sake of their family's menstrual health.

Secondly, why are condoms given out for free to promote safe sex, yet schools cannot provide free menstrual products to prevent fungal or bacterial infections, such as common urinary tract infections (UTI)? Menstruating students from middle to low-income families may have to utilize alternative solutions, such as rolling up a bunch of toilet tissue to prevent period stains on one's clothing. Doing this can cause skin irritation, vaginal itching, as well as other infections that may put a risk to the individual's health.

Lastly, poor hygiene and lack of menstrual products could cause students to miss class or feel embarrassed in school. Menstruation stigma continues to be an issue in today's society, resulting in individuals experiencing their period for the first time or regularly feeling embarrassed to discuss their menstrual health with friends or families. This bill could help destigmatize menstrual health in schools and the community and promote menstrual equality and equity for every menstruating individual, whether young girls, older women, non-binary, genderqueer, or trans.

Without this opportunity, menstruating students from middle to low-income families will continue to face complications and distress in finding solutions and alternatives to help with their menstrual health. Their menstrual health will be at high-risk, potentially causing them to seek medical help. In closing, I urge all members to support House Bill 2249 as this will bridge the menstrual health gap in the next generation.

Mahalo, for reading my testimony.

Zamantha Zamora
The University of Hawaii at Manoa
Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health
MSW Student Candidate

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:46:27 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Robin Valencia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Robin Valencia of Hilo, Hawaii and I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I have witnessed the impact of the inability to afford and obtain period products among school-age children. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our schools and daily student attendance, period poverty has made it even more difficult for students to access school. Period products are costly and with the rising cost of groceries, fuel and services, the additional expense of period products can be the deciding factor in whether or not a student will attend school. The cumulative impact of school non-attendance each month, over time, can be the deciding factor on whether a student will graduate from our K-12 system.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. According to our statewide statistics, a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. Bill HB2249 addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 6:01:36 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jean Morris	Chiefess Kamakahahelei Middle School	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have witnessed first hand how having products available for our students in school has relieved the anxiety for our female students. Students of single parent families in particular have shared that having a supply of products is not always a priority at home and knowing that they can access products anytime in school is a relief (especially since menstrual cycles are not consistent or predictable during these teen years). This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics in a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 6:38:40 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, Committee on Education, Chair Quinlan, Vice Chair Holt and Committee on Economic Development,

I support HB2249.

The social economic reality in our state is that too many families cannot afford to meet their basic needs in Hawaii. Girls are particularly vulnerable to Hawaii's high cost of living. A family on a limited income will prioritize rent, food, healthcare and transportation over menstrual products for the females in their family. As a result, these girls may stay home instead of going to school on the days when they have their period to avoid the shame of poverty.

We have an opportunity to uplift these girls and provide them the necessities that they need to continue their education.

Please support HB2249.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to support HB2249.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 6:59:05 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Farrah-Marie Gomes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the House Committee on Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB2249 relating to menstrual equity. Although a member of the Hawaii County Committee on the Status of Women and the University of Hawaii Commission on the Status of Women, as well as serving as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, the testimony I provide today is in my personal capacity as a lifelong resident and citizen of Hawaii Island.

It was heartwarming to read the pages of testimony submitted for SB2821 last week and I am grateful that your committee has agreed to hear this important bill on the same topic. It is clear that the issue of period poverty is real here in Hawaii. Parents do not choose the gender of their child and children who are born female are not asked at puberty if they wish to menstruate or not. These are some of the fundamental facts of life for women. The physical, psychological and social burdens of having to deal with menstruation once a month are challenging enough. Adding the financial burden to this can make it unsurmountable, especially for families who are already suffering to make ends meet during extremely difficult economic times.

While the financial cost of this measure appears to be a major sticking point for those who support the intent of this bill and offer comments for consideration, it should be noted that not all female students will seek out this service if and when made available on school campuses across the state, not initially anyways. The stigma attached to menstruating and not having adequate resources will need to be addressed before some students will build the confidence to seek assistance. Additionally, those who are able to afford their own products, may and likely will continue to do so. Through an equity lens, this bill attempts to level some of the field that our young women are having to navigate during already tumultuous times of their lives. This bill attempts to remove a financial barrier and increase access to a necessity for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Your support of young women across our entire state is recognized and greatly appreciated. I kindly ask for your vote in support of this measure. It carries a much larger message about gender equity, so much so that entire communities are mobilized around and behind you to assist in moving this effort forward.

Mahalo,

Farah-Marie Gomes, Ph.D.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:09:40 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Adriann Gin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Adriann and I am a resident of Honolulu, born and raised. I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I believe Hawaii's young women shouldn't be unintentionally put at a disadvantage due to natural biological changes. Feminine hygiene products cost money and is truly a basic need; being able to meet this need should never come down to the ability to pay, or tradeoff calculations such as, "should I buy my daughter the feminine hygiene products she needs, or use the same money to buy food to feed our entire family?". The impact of these conditions – this kind of tradeoff decision making – can cause trauma and have the potential to inflict far-reaching consequences on a young, developing girl's life. Let's do better to provide our young Hawaii girls with the support they deserve, so they can focus on doing well in school, being involved in their community, developing friendships with their peers and teachers, rather than worrying about embarrassing moments or worse, missing school entirely and affecting their chance at a brighter future. Please, I implore you to pass this bill for the future of all Hawaii's wahine. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:32:50 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Deisha Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Deisha Davis and I am a counselor at Ka'u High and Pahala Elementary School. I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I have witnessed how appreciative my students feel when they received the free feminine products from the Ma'i Movement. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:35:18 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
David Samulski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

While teaching here in Hawaii, two moments of my career stand clear.

This year, as a high school teacher in the DOE, I found out my transgender students, female to male, had a horrendous incident of body dysmorphia when they didn't have menstruation products one day when their cycle started.

And instead of having a simple and discreet place to grab what the hygiene product, required for this basic human need, they had to get a pass to the health room and ask around to multiple adults, until they found who was covering the health room that day, and could actually give them a pad. I implore you to use empathy and imagine how devastating it would be, for this already high-risk population, to have to deconstruct their identity as a man to multiple individuals in a desperate and time-sensitive issue to find quote-unquote "female" hygiene products.

Last year I taught 3rd grade at a state-funded charter school. One day at recess my 9-year student came up to me and told me her period had started and she had didn't have a pad. I brought her to the health room, while working to contact home, only to find out that our health room didn't have a single menstruation product available. I left my teary-eyed student in the room, begged my neighbor teacher to cover my class, then proceeded to run around door to door to ask all the female teachers if they had a spare pad. No one did.

This is unacceptable. The lahui that makes up the teachers of Hawai'i has a duty and obligation to our keiki. That responsibility includes, first and foremost, our students' emotional and physical safety. In failing to provide ready and available access to menstruation products, we the state, are failing in our kuleana to provide the necessary materials and learning environment for our student population to grow and be successful.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:35:31 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Leslie Toy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As an Assistant Principal in the Department of Education, I see firsthand how a students' feeling of safety and wellbeing directly correlates to their success in school. Students who are comfortable with me ask in hushed voices if I have menstrual supplies but I worry about those who may not feel comfortable with someone at school to ask. I support HB 2249 because it normalizes having these supplies on hand to support our students who may not have access to materials. Every student has a right to an education and a right to come to school -- this bill is in direct service to that public promise.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:47:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nicole A Velasco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2249 which requires both the Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap free of charge to all students served, respectively. I'm also in support of meaningful appropriations to ensure access to these hygiene products are consistent.

As a community, we've long touted our commitment to education and this bill follows suit. It is encouraging to see so many bill introducers who understand that a lack of access to menstrual hygiene products can deeply inhibit the health, wellness, and education of a student experiencing menstruation. We already know that sometimes our students skip school due to a sense of shame. Let's empower them with access to products needed so that they can stay in school, continue their learning, and reach their full potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to applaud existing and future efforts to support menstrual equity.

Mahalo,

Nicole

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:57:32 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
makena monaco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Makena and I am a resident of Honolulu attending 'Iolani School. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I believe that equality begins in our schools. Although many of us don't think twice about getting menstrual products, there are many people who cannot afford that luxury. Menstrual products are a necessity for women in Hawai'i, and we want to see a future where we don't have to worry about paying for our health products. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:17:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Avery Olson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Representative Quinlan, Representative Woodlan, and other members of the House Committee on Economic Development and the House Committee on Education,

I write to strongly SUPPORT HB2249.

There is no argument that all girls in Hawaii should have access to menstrual products. The real question is do all girls already have access? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Ma'i Movement Hawai'i conducted a pilot program in six schools on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i island and found a high need for access to menstrual products. In addition, the program found a correlation between lack of access to menstrual products and school absenteeism.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and please support HB2249.

Regards,
Dr. Avery Olson, MD

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:20:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shayna Lonoaea Alexander	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Shayna Lonoaea-Alexander and I'm submitting written testimony in strong support of HB2249.

In November, the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women and the Ma'i Movement Hawaii published a report collecting accounts from 361 women, girls, gender non-conforming people and mahu surveyed across the state on their experiences with menstruation. [Half of all respondents](#) in the study reported missing a day of school or work due to menstruation and one in five said they had to prioritize other necessities such as food and electricity over purchasing menstrual products.

In some schools, students who need sanitary supplies can go to the nurse. In others, they have to ask their teacher for a pass to the nurse, ask other students if they have sanitary products, or use unhealthy alternatives such as newspaper, old rags, and leaves. Having to jump through hoops for menstrual care can be traumatizing, especially for the [12% of Hawaii children living in poverty](#). Students who can't access pads or tampons often can't concentrate in class, risk bleeding through their underwear, and are forced to miss class or school altogether, falling behind on lessons and grades.

Please pass this measure ensuring women, girls, and all students who menstruate have essential access to sanitary products in Hawaii's schools.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:34:36 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Hollis Dana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

This bill is to me a no brainer! Young women and girls need to have their basic hygiene needs met while at school. There is nothing more degrading than not being able to keep yourself clean and appropriate for class when in school. Why providing basic period products, toilet paper and soap is considered nonessential is extremely hard to understand. Please support and pass bill HB2249!

Mahalo, Hollis Dana

Aloha House Of Representatives.

“There are an estimated 16.9 million people who menstruate living in poverty in the United States.” (Caitlin G. pg 7.) My name is Kaitlyn Allen and period poverty is a big problem that needs to be addressed. Please support HB 2249. I believe that we should require schools to give free period products to menstruators. The fact that there are people who had no choice but to use leaves because they didn’t have access to any period products is absolutely atrocious. People who menstruate don’t choose to bleed every month. You say that buying period products for schools will cost too much money but you usually make \$17.8 billion dollars from tourism. Also saying that “It’s too expensive” is basically telling us that our education is not worth the money. When I’m bleeding through my pants do you think I’m paying attention? No, I’m thinking about how I’m going to get to the next class without being judged for having my period. I had a friend who was on her period and she had no period products and she was bleeding through her pants. She had to continually wipe her seat because she didn’t know what to do. This also brings me to another point: the stigma around periods is insane. An example of this would be when I had my first I was too scared to tell anyone including my friends because I felt embarrassed even though it’s a normal thing. I have even stayed home due to me having my period. In conclusion, you should require schools to give out period products because it will messes with our education and it messes with our health. I strongly urge The House to pass HB 2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for reading and supporting HB 2249.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:52:02 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Bliss Kaneshiro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Menstrual hygiene products can be very costly. Many of Hawai'i's families are struggling right now and having to make difficult decisions about what they can afford. This is a matter of equity. Individuals with inadequate access to menstrual products often are unable to attend school, face discrimination and harassment, and are more likely to have unhygienic practices around menstruation. I support increasing access to these products so that all children and adolescents can participate equally in school and school activities.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:53:48 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Joseph Passantino	Ke'elikolani Middle School	Support	No

Comments:

We are very lucky to have crossed paths with the Ma'i Movement. Thanks to them, we were able to partner with them and they provided our young women on campus female products. In the past young women had to go to the health room and pay money for a pad if they did not have their own. This pilot project allowed us to fully stock our bathrooms with female products and helped to lessen time out of class and provided equity for all. We appreciate the formation of the bill and the support from the legislature to help fund this and make this a reality for all young women across all schools.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022

TIME: 2:00 PM Via Videoconference

SUPPORT FOR HB2249 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality.

This bill requires the Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on their respective campuses, and also makes appropriations.

Before Senate President Ron Kouchi made me aware of the Ma'i Movement late last year, I had never given thought to the issue of period poverty. But now I think about it often and wonder how our community can allow this situation to continue. The impact of the indignity this kind of poverty has on adolescent girls and individuals who menstruate is incalculable.

Passing HB2249 would give exposure to an issue I expect few have thought about previously. Once people are made aware of the issue, I believe you would be hard-pressed to find anyone in our state who wouldn't support the idea that every adolescent girl and individual who menstruate should have access to period products free of charge.

It is not often that elected leaders are able to have a profound impact on the lives of so many with a bill as simple as HB2249. But this is exactly what you will be doing when you pass HB2249. You will make certain that this generation of adolescent girls and individuals who menstruate and those to follow will never again have to feel the shame that period poverty causes.

Thank you for considering my opinion on this important bill.

Mahalo,

Linda Lingle
Governor of Hawaii (2002-2010)

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:30:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Julie Anne Felix Bacarro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Sen. Justin H. Woodson, Chair

Sen. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Committee on Education

Sen. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Sen. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Julie Anne Bacarro

Department of Education Employee with School-Based Behavioral Health

Contact Number (808)342-1683

Tuesday, February 8th 2022

Support of H.B. No. 2249, Relating To Menstrual Equality

Good morning Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members. My name is Julie Anne Bacarro. I am a Department of Education Employee with the School-Based Behavioral Health Division. I come to you as a mental health community member and advocate.

I am in support to H.B. No. 2249, Relating to Menstrual Equality. I have seen it time and time again in Hawaii public schools that our adolescents are struggling with obtaining menstrual products. I am providing school-based mental health services for students at the Hawaii School for the Deaf and the Blind.

One of the most prominent part of a young women's life is starting their menstrual cycle. In my own experience, coming from a hearing family who spoke both English and Filipino, I learned the ins-and-outs of puberty and periods. I was provided the education by the Hawaii Department of Education and my parents bought me menstrual products from the stores. For the deaf and blind students, the school is providing sexual health education. Though these students learn about menstrual cycles and products, they may not be receiving the same education from their families due to not lack of language or the perception that the school system will teach them everything they need to know.

There were several occasions where I noticed we had period poverty in the Hawaii school system. I became aware of students using toilet paper as a pad during the school day. Students would sit in their underwear while being on their period during the school day. After these incidents, the school nurse supplied them with products (pads). There are some staff members who buy menstrual products for these young female students just in case they felt uncomfortable walking to the school nurse's office.

I would like to see more access for female students to receive menstrual products at school. There are some free menstrual products dispensers at colleges and universities. There should be the same access for young female students in Hawaii public schools because on average females start their periods in the teen years. We need to end period poverty in Hawaii public schools by providing our students with proper sexual health education and necessities (menstrual products).

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:31:18 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tiffany Edwards Hunt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for this bill and any other bills that are attempting to address period poverty in Hawai`i. As a teacher, I can tell you firsthand that we have a lot of girls who end up missing school due to the lack of resources at home for them. I just didn't even realize the level of poverty in our community until I became a teacher and learned that there are families who do not have the means to buy their child(ren) period supplies. It is just so devastating to me. And to think that they have to miss school because they don't have a tampon or maxi pad in the home, or their undergarments are all soiled and they do not have the means to go to the laundromat to freshen up their clothing. Please do whatever you can on your end to try and alleviate this major problem in our island communities. Mahalo nui loa.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:31:31 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jamie Kapana	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

My name is Jamie Kapana and I am a resident of Kapolei.

I am testifying in support of HB2249 because I believe that students' first priority while in school should be learning and not making sure they have period products.

Growing up, I lost my mom at a young age. This definitely made me ashamed to talk about my period because I didn't have anyone close around me to make me feel comfortable. I was also going through the foster care system and group homes for a year or two I remember how ashamed I felt if I needed to ask for period products while also going to school. It was hard for me to adjust and it made it even harder during that time of the month.

I know firsthand how hard it can be to deal with from a student's perspective. Because of this, I feel it's my responsibility to speak up and ask that you pass HB2249 to make period products free for students so they don't have to worry about running into that situation. Many may feel that this topic is only for girls and women, but that's not true. What example are we giving young boys when we dismiss it "because it's only a girl problem".

No one is being left out and missing out when everyone is able to show up for school and given the same opportunity to go about their day worry-free. Periods are normal and happen all the time. We need to break the stigma around the topic and I strongly believe this bill will help do so.

Thank you,

Jamie Kapana

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:33:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Kapela, and Committee Members:

I am writing in **strong support** of HB 2249, which would require the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to students.

Income is the foremost determinant of health. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic DOE determined that almost half of its students were economically disadvantaged. Young women from under-resourced households should no longer have to bear the humiliation that comes with lack of access to menstrual products. Lack of access may result in absenteeism that deprives them of their ability to participate in educational and co-curricular activities. Prolonged use of menstrual products endangers their health.

Under-resourced Native Hawaiian and other Pasifika students are especially impacted by economic and other structural inequities. A 2018 study by Hawaii's Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism found [high rates of poverty among Marshallese \(51.1%\), Samoan \(20.4%\), Tongan \(16.2%\), and Native Hawaiian \(15.5%\) populations](#). [Hawaii leads the nation in the criminalization of its schoolchildren](#), with Native Hawaiian, Pasifika, Black, and intellectually disabled students facing disproportionate rates of arrest.

Hawaii schools should advance policies that prioritize student health and well-being. As such, Hawaii should join California, New York, Illinois, New Hampshire, and Virginia in making menstrual products to available to students without charge. In 2020, [Scotland made menstrual equity national policy for all women](#) and not just those attending state-funded schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:33:43 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alexa St Martin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:35:14 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Cindy Nawilis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2249 because I remember growing up sometimes not having a pad or tampon with me at school, and what an ordeal that can become. I am lucky friends and female teachers came to the rescue, and even then I was already one of the privileged people who never had problems having a ready supply of menstrual products at home.

Please enact this bill so that underrepresented girls at school have equal access to learning and opportunity.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:43:58 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support the passage of HB2249.
Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee

Kihei

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:01:14 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Joy Au	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have many students who need the support of the community and state to ensure uninterrupted access to education. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics in a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:11:38 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shandhini Raidoo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am an obstetrician-gynecologist and I specialize in pediatric and adolescent gynecology. I am writing in support of HB 2249. Many of my patients struggle with being able to afford menstrual hygiene products and menstruating children and adolescents frequently have to miss school because of this. Missing school puts them further behind in their education and can negatively impact their ability to fulfil their full potential. Having menstrual products available in schools for menstruating students will greatly improve their wellbeing and ability to focus on their education.

Mahalo for your care of our keiki,

Shandhini Raidoo, MD, MPH

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:16:19 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jeannice Aguilar	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Respective Committees:

Passage of this bill would help address just one of the many barriers that impact menstruating people while attending school. It may arguably be the first step necessary to help promote healthy conversations about proper hygiene, self-care, and the importance of gender equity.

Thank you,

Jeannice Aguilar

February 7, 2022

Debra Henton
95 No Ka Oi Place
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746

Aloha Honorable Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee:

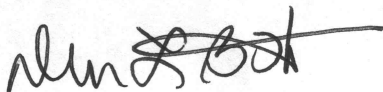
My name is Debra Henton and I am a resident of Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii. I serve on several Board of Directors positions on Kauai; Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii a Native Hawaiian Health Center and the Garden Island Federal Credit Union in Lihue, Kauai. Recently I started a Diaper Bank Pantry on Kauai that houses diapers and distributes children and adult diapers to those in need and the underserved. In the pantry we also have a very limited selection of feminine products for those who cannot afford to purchase these products and these products are provided to us by the Ma'i Movement.

I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have experienced that having menstrual products in the Hawaii Public school campuses is important and help our young ladies. I personally have witnessed that a pilot program at Chiefess Kamakahahei has helped my niece who is 11 years old. One day out of the blue she needed a feminine product and was so relieved that it was available in the girls' restrooms. She didn't have to be embarrassed and immediately was able to solve her issue. She didn't have to go back into the classroom and interrupt the class so that she could either borrow or ask for some help. I am writing in strong support of SB2821 and requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawaii Public and charter school campuses. As a mother and grandmother, I am an advocate for addressing this inequity.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. Statewide statistics a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. I strongly urge this committee to pass **HB2249** to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and share my direct experience with you.

Mahalo nui loa!



Debra L Henton

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:34:47 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Cyd L. Hoffeld	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Cyd L. Hoffeld and I am a resident of Hilo. I am testifying in **strong support** of **HB2249** which requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public-school campuses. As a woman and single parent of two daughters, I have experienced at times the embarrassment of not having enough menstrual supplies and the financial burden of having to frequently purchase such expensive products for many, many years.

Providing free menstrual products at public and charter schools will allow students the ability to participate in their educational pursuits with less stress and embarrassment when menstruating.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this **HB2249**.

Cyd L. Hoffeld

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:44:35 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alice van Veenendaal	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

House Committee on Education

Representative Justin Woodson, Chair

Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice-Chair

My name is Alice van Veenendaal, I am a graduate student in the WGSS department at UH Manoa and a resident of Kaimuki.

I am in full SUPPORT of HB2249, as all women, girls and people who menstruate deserve access to state funded period products in schools.

Mahalo nui for your time.

Alice van Veenendaal

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:05:46 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stacie M Burke	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Rep. Justin H. Woodson , Chair

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

House Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Support for H.B. No. 2249 Relating to Menstrual Equality

Aloha

I am testifying in strong support for H.B. 2249. We must do better for the young people of Hawai'i. I was aware of period poverty projects distributing menstrual products to those in our houseless community as well as in our local prisons. I was shocked to learn that there was also a need in our public schools.

The actions of members in our community has given me hope. Organizations like the Ma'i Movement have stepped up to provide products for our menstruating citizens. More importantly, they have brought much needed attention to the issue of period poverty in our schools. Through their work with local educators they have inspired students to take part in our legislative process.

I ask our legislators to take advantage of the opportunity to provide this basic need, in turn, showing these young people that civic engagement yields results.

Mahalo

Stacie Maile Burke

Aiea, Hawai'i

February 7, 2022

Aloha Honorable Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alea Alvarez and I attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

I am testifying in support of HB-2249 bill because I believed that the Department of Education should provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on public school campuses. By passing this bill you are ensuring that all students needing these products can ease the intimidation and overwhelming feelings some girls endure when menstrual products are not available and/or easily accessible.

Going to school while on my menstrual cycle was not always a great nor comfortable experience. For some having to deal with the cramps and pain throughout the day can be bothersome. Not having the proper hygienic products when one is going through their menstrual cycle can be a barrier when engaging in their day-to-day activities.

I urge all to support HB-2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students, especially those who find it difficult to attain.

Mahalo for your time,
Alea Alvarez

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:31:08 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
debora letelier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Debora Letelier and I am a resident of the Big Island. I am originally from Chile and have lived in this amazing islands for about 8 years now. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because no little girl should have to grow up so fast to experience the hardships of life, when we know as adults, as a community, and as a society, that we can do better and help.

I also believe that no little girl or their mothers, should experience period poverty and/or period discrimination. No little girl or mother should have to choose between quality and price to feel clean and comfortable.

We have the tools in this bill to help them cherish and embrace the natural process of growing up and going through puberty and this is why I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.”

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:33:16 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
debora letelier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Debora Letelier and I am a resident of the Big Island. I am originally from Chile and have lived in this amazing islands for about 8 years now. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because no little girl should have to grow up so fast to experience the hardships of life, when we know as adults, as a community, and as a society, that we can do better and help.

I also believe that no little girl or their mothers, should experience period poverty and/or period discrimination. No little girl or mother should have to choose between quality and price to feel clean and comfortable.

We have the tools in this bill to help them cherish and embrace the natural process of growing up and going through puberty and this is why I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.”

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:43:28 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nina Gayle Baluran	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha and Hāfa ādai

My name is Nina Gayle Baluran, and I am an MSW Distance Education student from the island of Guam. I am a graduate student with the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am here today to say that I **strongly support** HB2249 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY, which Requires the Department of Education to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper menstrual products, and hand soap-free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide hygiene products that support public health, such as toilet paper, menstrual products, and hand soap-free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses.

Period Poverty is an issue that impacts not just women and girls. It also has an impact on their families. Period Poverty disproportionately affects students of low-income and houseless girls, women, trans and non-conforming individuals.

As a pacific islander woman and a social work student, I understand both personally and on a bigger scale the impact of period poverty. In my role as a woman and future social worker, I recognize the socioeconomic injustice it takes to be a woman and have her period. At the same time, many may not think that periods are an issue that requires much thought to have periods; I say otherwise.

Today, 1 in 3 parents in the United States is concerned about their capacity to purchase period supplies. Imagine not having access to food, water, or shelter, which are such basic necessities to want. Now imagine how women and girls have to worry about where to get a pad or tampon when they get their periods, which is a basic necessity in its own right. Imagine being unable to show up to school for days because you are menstruating and have no period supplies. Menstruation should not be a barrier to education. Imagine the shame these young women and girls face by not being comfortable asking for a pad or tampon because they do not have equitable access to period supplies.

By providing access to free menstruation products in schools, we provide a clean, safe, and comfortable space for these young women and girls. We are creating a healthy environment for them to thrive in their right to manage their bodies without shame and stigma. We are bringing up a generation of women to have equal and equitable access to a basic necessity that they may

struggle to obtain in their households. I strongly urge the committee to pass HB2249. If this measure passes, we will be one step closer to eradicating menstruators' stigma. We will make sure that kids do not miss a single minute of education that they do not need to. We will make strides toward a more inclusive and fair education system. Thank you for providing me with the chance to testify.

Mahalo nui loa & si Yu'us ma'āse',

Nina Gayle Baluran
The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health
MSW Student

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:46:57 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sabra Della Lucia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

For five years I worked as a therapist for at risk youth in the Kalihi, Waipahu, and Waianae middle and high school. I also worked with youth groups in Kaka‘ako who attended Central middle school. Of the dozens of young women that I worked with weekly, products for their mensural cycle were ALWAYS requested. When the requests could not be met, kids would opt out of attending school. It was heartbreaking to know that had the school provided those they a) would not have missed school and/ or b) that would have been one more reason for them to attend school as there were many other barriers with this high risk population. Schools are uniquely positioned to address the gap in services for young women. Products of this nature should be provided by the state. No question.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:00:57 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Charley Wilkinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Charley and I am a resident of Kaka‘ako. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I believe no one should miss out on educational, vocational, or social opportunities because they lack access to menstrual products.

The recent surveys conducted in schools by Ma‘i Movement demonstrate that young people in our communities are losing precious time in the classroom because of their period. Many have been forced to utilize unsterile items so that they can attend school, go to work or live their social lives. This is an unacceptable reality in our state, and you have the opportunity to change this for our young people by supporting **HB2249**.

Providing period products free of charge in Hawai‘i's schools is the best way to make them immediately available to young people who need them. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:51:46 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sasha Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

I support providing schools with menstrual products for biological female students, but oppose HB2249 because Section 2 and Section 3 state that schools would be required to provide menstrual products to all students. Section 1 states that menstrual products are vital to the well being of "girls, transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming individuals," despite later admitting that "menstruation is a biological process linked to female sex." It is a fact that only biological women can menstruate, and thus it is biological women who need menstrual products. There is no reason for taxpayers to provide menstrual products for biological men. To better support girls in school, I propose that a new bill be drafted requiring public and charter schools to provide menstrual products to its biological female students.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 2:33:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Amanda Wilson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Amanda and I am a resident of Wailuku and a teacher at Kihei Charter School. I am testifying in support of **HB2249** because I have witnessed many of my students needing period supplies but not having access to them. If a student is living with a father only, low income, and/or not driving, it can be hard to make sure to have all the necessary supplies. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 3:01:51 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Austen Kinney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Representative Woodson, Representative Kapela and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Austen Kinney and I am a freshman at Punahou School. I am a resident of Maunawili. I am testifying in support of SB2821 because I believe that every menstruator, no matter the gender or economic status, should have equal and convenient access to menstrual products.

Last year, I founded a student group called The Hanawai Sisterhood, and to date, I have donated approximately 6,000 menstrual products to Dole Middle School and Kalākaua Middle School. I've heard firsthand from the nurses and counselors at both schools that students frequently request menstrual products and often are unable to afford even the 25-cent charge per piece that the school requests. When I last was at Kalākaua to drop off products, the nurse relayed that she had already seen six students who had requested products that morning, and it was only 10 a.m.

The Hanawai Sisterhood has depended on community donations to provide these products, but the need far exceeds what one organization can provide. I believe no student should have to compromise their attendance at school or their education because they are unable to maintain proper menstrual hygiene.

Just as the DOE/state provides toilet paper, paper towels and soap in school restrooms, menstrual products should be available without having to make a special request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Austen Kinney (she/her), Punahou School Class of 2025

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 3:33:31 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela and members,

To those of us who have never faced the issue of "period poverty" in our lives, the fact that this is happening in the United States and most specifically in Hawaii seems unimaginable. But it is. Our children are using period products beyond the recommended safe period of time which is between 4-8 hours, and sometimes for days, because they lack access. They face potential medical issues including preventable infections that make them susceptible to cervical cancer, infertility and toxic shock syndrome, which are serious and can result in death. With such a lack of access to period products, menstruators are forced to rely on old rags, leaves, newspaper, and diapers as alternatives. I for one find this horrifying. This measure seems the least we can do for our public school keiki.

The twin evils of poverty and gender discrimination are at play here. Please move this important bill out of committee,

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed

Life-time Feminist in Mililani

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 3:40:29 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tanya Smith-Johnson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Chair Justin Woodson

TO: Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela

House Committee on Education

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 2:00 pm

FROM: Tanya Smith-Johnson

RE: Support for HB2249 - Requires the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to all students on all Hawaii public and charter school campuses

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela and committee members,

I am in strong support of HB2249. The provision of menstrual products is vital for ensuring the health, dignity, and full participation of students. Research shows that 86% of people who menstruate have started their periods unexpectedly in public, and 34% have needed to leave what they were doing to retrieve period products. Such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, which can be particularly burdensome on youth, 47% of which were already deemed economically disadvantaged by the DOE pre-COVID.

The [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) revealed the extent of period poverty and menstrual inequity in the state with nearly 30% of respondents reporting that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining period products, of which high cost was the most cited reason. The impact of inadequate access on education loss was clear in the report with 42% of respondents missing class or leaving school early because they did not have period products. Compared to a [national study commissioned by Always](#), Hawai'i fared worse. In that study, 1 in 5 struggled to get period products and 1 in 5 girls in the US have missed school.

By providing menstrual products in schools, Hawai'i helps ensure its students have equal access to education and are empowered to reach their full potential, irrespective of their gender or economic status. A lack of access to menstrual products is associated with serious health and social issues, including emotional duress, physical infection, and disease. Research also shows that students with inadequate menstrual support experience higher rates of absence and are less able to focus and engage in the classroom. Absenteeism can lead to significant performance

gaps and is linked to social disengagement, feelings of alienation, and adverse outcomes even into adulthood.

HB2249 is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity in Hawai'i and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equity for girls, and transgender and non-binary people.

For all of these reasons, I support HB2249 and urge you to do the same. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tanya Smith-Johnson, MS, CPM

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 4:52:15 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mareva Minerbi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:46:01 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Clare M Hanusz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Greetings Chair and Committee Members,

Please support HB2249, which is critically important to girls from low income families for their dignity, education and health.

Thank you,

Clare Hanusz

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 7:18:21 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Grace Furuta	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

During the school year my friend and I hosted a drive for feminine hygiene products. During this time, I saw how expensive these items are for many people, and how much it effects our community. Nearly half the population have periods during the month, public schools students should have access to these basic necessities. My auntie told me that she leaves pads and tampons in her room for students to access, this should be provided by the school.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 7:33:27 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Andrea Bertoli	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill to help destigmatize period products and to help young people access the products they need.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:15:50 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Logan Okita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of House Bill HB2249.

My name is Logan Okita and I am a National Board Certified Teacher at Nimitz Elementary in Central District and Vice President of the Hawaii State Teachers Association.

Students who need menstrual products should have access to free products at our schools so they are not excluded from learning or activities due to embarrassment or physical discomfort. Menstrual products are a basic healthcare and safety need the same way bandaids and face masks. Schools give bandaids and face masks to students without thinking twice about the cost, so schools should be able to provide menstrual products without a cost to students also.

Please vote in support of House Bill HB2249. Thank you for the opportunity to testify!

Sincerely,

Logan Okita, NBCT

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 8:59:49 AM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Anika Martin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in support of HB2249, This bill is an initiative that takes steps to addressing menstrual inequality and end period poverty, especially among our low-income communities. A statewide statistics survey conducted in 2021 found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to inaccessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence that students in the State of Hawaii are using period products beyond the recommended safe time- thus, resorting to unhygienic alternatives.

Growing up as a cis-gendered woman, it was difficult for me to have period products readily available because I was raised by a single-mother who could not afford enough period products for herself, my sister, and me. This was especially difficult in high school because I participated heavily in sports.

HB-2249

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 12:23:32 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elizabeth Baker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Representatives,

My name is Elizabeth Baker and I am a proud public school educator at ‘Ilima Intermediate in ‘Ewa Beach, where I teach choir and ‘ukulele. I am writing in strong support of HB2249 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai‘i public and charter school campuses.

I invite you to think back to when you were in middle school (a little traumatizing, I know) – all of the social pressures, the constant anxiety, and so much... new. For me, it was the era of glasses, braces, and acne (...all at the same time). Now, imagine that you are beginning to menstruate. Cue: one more thing to add to the overwhelming pile of tweenage despair. More stress, more anxiety, more fear, more confusion. Middle school will always be stressful (and let’s be honest, a transformative time of our lives for better or for worse) – but what if we could alleviate even just one stress from these students?

As a teacher, I have had many students approach me, scared and timid, asking, “Do you have, um... well, I forgot my.... and I’m on my... um, do you have any extras?” It breaks my heart to see their fear. I can hear their thoughts: what if my teacher doesn’t have extras? What will I use instead? Can I go to the health room? Will *they* have?

Then, I see the relief in their eyes when I say, “Of course. They’re right here.” Imagine if we could provide that relief for students before they even have to ask.

Thankfully, a Hawai‘i with free period products for public school students is not one we have to imagine – it is a Hawai‘i we can make a reality with your support. I strongly urge this committee to pass HB2249 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. I truly appreciate the opportunity to testify. Mahalo piha.