

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 16, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2821 SD1– RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY.**

Hearing: Friday, January 28, 2022 3:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference and Conference Room 229,
State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure and defers to the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Public Charter School Commission as to implementation and needed resources. The Department requests the appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations. (SD1)

The SD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Adding a purpose section; and
- (2) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Committee report noted that the appropriation required for this measure is \$1,000,000.

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

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

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2821, S.D. 1

February 18, 2022
10:10 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

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

Senate Bill No. 2821, S.D. 1, adds a new section to Chapters 302A and 302D, HRS, to require the Department of Education (DOE) and State Public Charter School Commission (Commission) to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. The measure also appropriates an unspecified sum of general funds in FY 23 to DOE and the Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation 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



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: SB 2821 SD1 Relating to Menstrual Equality
DATE: February 18, 2022, 10:10 AM
CCOMMITTEE: Committee on Ways and Means
ROOM: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
FROM: Yvonne Lau, Interim Executive Director
State Public Charter School Commission

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

The State Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB 2821**. This measure requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses and requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses, and makes appropriations.

The Commission deeply 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 looks forward to working with the 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.



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

Date: 02/18/2022

Time: 10:10 AM

Location: CR 211 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Ways and Means

Department: Education

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

Title of Bill: SB 2821, SD1 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations. (SD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 2821 SD1. This bill would require the Department to provide free menstrual products to all students on all public school campuses.

Menstrual products may be difficult for some students to afford or access when they are in need and having these materials available to students for free at school could potentially help them to stay in class and engage in instructional activities. However, passage of this bill would have a financial impact on the Department.

Approximately 45,800 students identified as female are currently enrolled in grades 5-12 in Hawaii public non-charter schools. If each of these individuals uses three products per day for five days every month and the school year lasts 10 months, it is estimated that each person would utilize 150 products per school year. One menstrual pad costs approximately \$0.14. The total cost for menstrual products each year is estimated to be \$1,000,000.00. The Department would opt to not provide tampons because there is a risk for liability in the potential for the user to not follow all labeled directions in the package and the increased risk for infections such as yeast, fungal, and bacterial (e.g. toxic shock syndrome).

The Department appreciates this proposal and the inclusion of funding 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 the Coronavirus Disease 2019 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 for all students.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:35:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	No

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 strongly supports SB2821. This is long overdue. Please pass this bill. Thank you.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member, Rainbow Family 808

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Friday, February 18, 2022
10:10 AM
Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference

in consideration of
SB 2821, SD1
RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

Chair DELA CRUZ, Vice Chair KEITH-AGARAN, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

Common Cause Hawaii provides comments in support of SB 2821, SD1, which (1) requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses, (2) requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products 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 SB 2821, SD1. If you have questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 12:39:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Rachel Kuenzi	Testifying for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Hawai'i supports SB 2821.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 12:45:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Edith	Testifying for Zonta Club of Kauai	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Vice Chair,

I fully support SB 2821 for free menstrual products in Hawaii public and charter school for adolescent girls who start their period. These products would provide the girls sanitary protection and the elimination the stigma of shame.

Sincerely,

Edith Ignacio Neumiller

Past President Zonta Club of Kauai



To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: February 18, 2022 10:10AM
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2821 SD1

Dear Chair Dela-Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2821 SD1 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

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 16, 2022

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz Chair,
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2821 SD 1 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

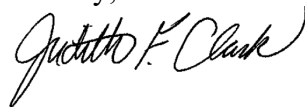
Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 2821 SD 1 Relating to Menstrual Equality.

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



'Ilima Intermediate Students & Teacher Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin

February 18, 2022

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
 Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
 Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,

My name is [Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin](#) and I teach at 'Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach. **Myself, and the students I sponsor in the 'Ilima Intermediate Activist Club and the Rainbow Royales Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Club are writing to you today asking for your support of Senate Bill 2821 SD 1** 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.

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

Testimony of Mrs. Mili & 'Ilima Intermediate School Activist & GSA Clubs in Favor of SB 2821 SD 1

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 SB 2821 SD 1 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.

SB 2821 SD 1 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](#).

We'd also like to thank **Senator Kidani** for meeting with my students last year, and **Senator Kouchi** for his support this session. The positive feedback they received from both legislative leaders has empowered my students to stay involved on this critical equity issue, even though our bills have failed during the 2020 and 2021 sessions.

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 400 free menstrual care packs at our school.

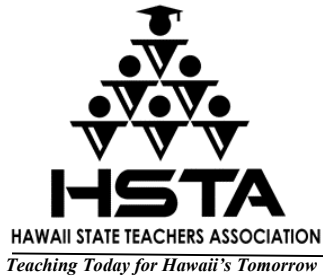


While community care is important, good policy can support community care and educational equity. We urge you to please support this bill.

Mahalo for Reading & Joining Us in Supporting SB 2821 SD 1,

Teacher Sarah "Mili" Milianta-Laffin &

The 'Ilima Intermediate School Activist Club & Rainbow Royales GSA Club



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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SB2821, SD1– RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2022

OSA TUI, JR., PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support SB2821, SD1**, relating to menstrual equality. This bill requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses and requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products 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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 6:10:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
David Peters	Testifying for Ho`ola Lahui Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Thank for the opportunity to testify in strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. HLH has been working to distribute products to our community and have received many positive comments and appreciation for doing so. HLH has also seen first hand the need for the distribution of these products in our community.



Hawaii Women's Coalition

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Honorable Chair Donovan Dela Cruz
Honorable Vice Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Senator Lorraine Inouye
Senator Dru Kanuha
Senator Michelle Kidani
Senator Bennette Misalucha
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Maile Shimabukuro
Senator Brian Taniguichi
Senator Glenn Wakai
Senator Kurt Fevella

DATE: Friday, February 18, 2022, 10:10 am

FROM: Hawai'i Women's Coalition

RE: **Support for SB2821** - Requires the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to all students on all Hawaii public and charter school campuses

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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 SB2821**. 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



Hawaii Women's Coalition

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.

SB2821 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 **SB2821**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Hawai‘i Women’s Coalition

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:08:36 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Logan Okita	Testifying for Hawaii State Teachers Association	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821.

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.

After listening to the testimony of students at other hearings in support of this bill, I realized I grew up with the privilege of being able to access the products I needed to care for myself easily. I did not have to worry about where I would find a pad when I needed one because my parents could afford to keep our bathrooms stocked with menstrual products along with other basic hygiene supplies. I did not think twice when a peer needed a pad because I could give them one from my backpack and replace it when I got home. Every person who menstruates should be able to access these necessary products with ease.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821. Thank you for the opportunity to testify!

Sincerely,

Logan Okita, NBCT

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:35:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

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 SB 2821 SD 1.

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



SENATE BILL 2821, SD 1, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

FEBRUARY 18, 2022 · SENATE WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE · CHAIR SEN. DONOVAN DELA CRUZ

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 2821, SD 1, relating to menstrual equity, which requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses and requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter 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



Bill: Senate Bill 2821 SD1
Title: Relating to Menstrual Equality
Position: SUPPORT
Committee: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Date: February 18, 2022 10:10 am

Aloha Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Aragan and Members of the Committee,

We, the members of the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus, give strong support to SB2821 SD1 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 SB2821 SD1 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: Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **SB 2821 SD1, Relating to menstrual equity**
10:10 AM, February 18, 2022

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members,

On behalf of HCAN Speaks!, thank you for the opportunity to **testify in support of Senate Bill 2821 SD1, 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>

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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

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



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Friday, February 18, 2022

10:10 AM

SB 2821 SD1 STRONG SUPPORT for MENSTRUAL EQUITY!

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee!

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 4,103 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,114 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.

SB 2821 SD1 appropriates funds to the Department of Education for all public schools and public charter schools to provide menstrual products to students.

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.

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 and fund it appropriately.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our support for this measure!



The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Honorable Chair Donovan Dela Cruz
Honorable Vice Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Senator Lorraine Inouye
Senator Dru Kanuha
Senator Michelle Kidani
Senator Bennette Misalucha
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Maile Shimabukuro
Senator Brian Taniguichi
Senator Glenn Wakai
Senator Kurt Fevella

Friday, February 18, 2022, 10:10 am

RE: **Support for SB2821** - 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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i **strongly supports SB2821** 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. Furthermore, we fully support the Senate Committee on Education's amendment as noted in their committee report which makes an appropriation of \$1,000,000 required for this measure. 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 at DreamHouse 'Ewa Beach, Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School, Samuel Enoka Kalama Intermediate School, Ka'ū High & Pāhala Elementary School, Princess Ke'elikōlani Middle School, and Farrington High School. 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, Ka'ū High & Pāhala Elementary School, which had 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. All schools ordered both pads and tampons, and we noticed tampon requests were higher at the high school level. We strongly support leaving the language of SB2821 permissive to allow schools to purchase the period products their students need. According to a 2020 study [*“Device-Associated Menstrual Toxic*](#)

[Shock Syndrome](#)”, toxic shock syndrome (TSS) was classically associated with high absorbency tampon use in the 1980s. However, there are multiple forms of TSS, many of which have no connection to menstruation or tampon use and occur in both males and females. In the last 40 years, the incidence of tampon-induced TSS has declined now that changes were made to tampon absorbency, composition, public health education and labeling regulations. The current incidence of menstrual TSS is 0.5 to 1.0 per 100,00 population.

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.

SB2821 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 **SB2821** 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	Hawaii Foodbank
ACLU of Hawai'i	Ho'ola Lahui Hawaii
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Hawai'i Section	Boys & Girls Clubs of Maui
AAUW of Hawai'i	Hawai'i Arts Alliance
Hawaii State Teachers Association	Women Helping Women
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates	Pua Mohala Healing & Advocacy Services
YWCA O'ahu	The Pantry by Feeding Hawaii Together
Hale Kipa	Bay Clinic, Inc.
Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center	Trans Hawai'i Project
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii	Princess Ke'elikolani Middle School
Community Alliance on Prisons	Nest for Families
AF3IRM Hawai'i	Malama I Ke Ola Health Center
Breastfeeding Hawaii	UHM Women's Center
Going Home Hawaii	Maui AIDS Foundation
Trillium Birthing Services	HHSC Kauai Region
Keiki Kaukau	Lanai Community Health Center
Zen Den Midwifery	Days for Girls International
The Hanawai Sisterhood	The Pad Project
	Alliance for Period Supplies

CONSTITUENT SUPPORT

As of this submission, over 300 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 mimovement.org/talk-story.

PERIOD POVERTY & MENSTRUAL INEQUITY IN HAWAII 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.

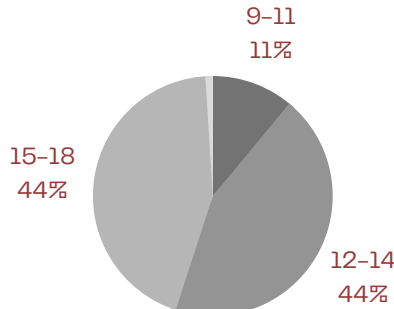


6 SCHOOLS IN THE PILOT

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.

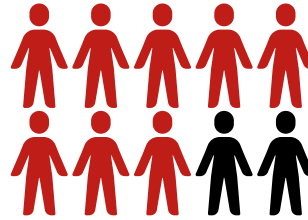
LOW COST INITIATIVE

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.

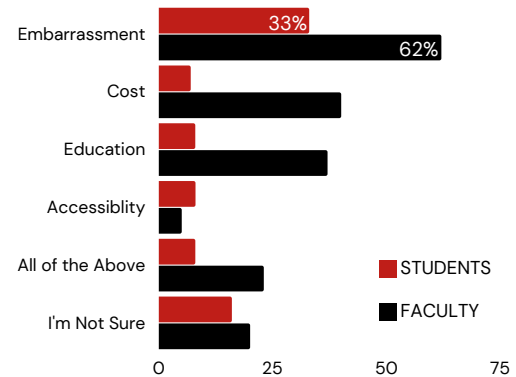


8 / 10 STUDENTS

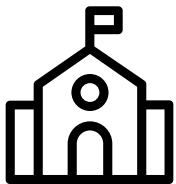
FACE DIFFICULTIES
GETTING PERIOD
PRODUCTS

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.

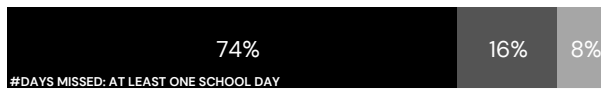


ABSENTEEISM & EDUCATION INEQUITY

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

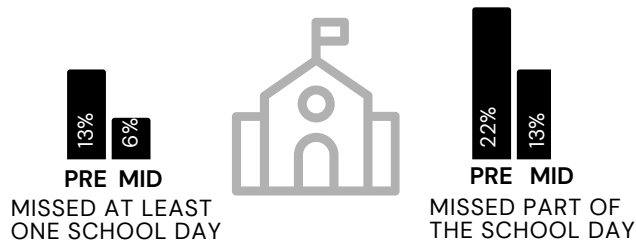
At the beginning of the school year, faculty and students agreed that embarrassment was the biggest barrier to students, followed by cost and education.

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.

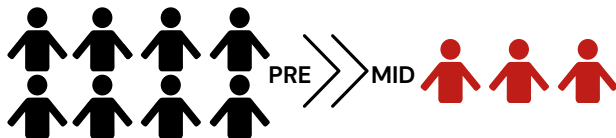
29% of faculty observed providing period products had a positive impact on students' social and emotional well-being.

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 SB2821/HB2249 TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS FREE IN ALL PUBLIC & CHARTER SCHOOLS



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2821

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, & Members – Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Trisha Kajimura
Deputy Director - Community
DATE: February 18, 2022 at 10:10 AM

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 2821 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 women 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 young women 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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:31:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nicky Winter	Testifying for Achieve Zero	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because no girl should have to reuse period products or feel the shame of not being able to properly care for themselves during times of menstruation. It is our responsibility to support our young girls and period poverty must stop now.

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.



February 17, 2022

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **HB – Relating to Menstrual Equality**

Aloha Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means-

My name is Jessica Histo, and I am the founder and president of the Hawai'i Diaper Bank. I am writing in support of **SB 2821, Requiring the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses.**

Menstrual equality especially among our developing keiki is so important. Students should not have to worry about missing school or the embarrassment of potential “accidents,” because they or their family can’t afford something as fundamental as a feminine hygiene product. Thankfully organizations like the Ma‘i Movement have been providing assistance to wāhine all over Hawai‘i. However, I believe like other basic essentials, our elected officials should be working to help all of our children especially within the school setting where they should feel safe and supported.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2821. Please feel free to contact me with any other questions or concerns.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Jessica Histo
Founder and President



jessica@hawaiidiaperbank.org
(808)-385-1167



To: Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Friday., Feb. 18, 2022, 10:10AM
Re: Testimony Supporting SB2821

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rozlyn Calderon, I am the Regional Field Organizer for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates Hawai'i writing today to urge you to support SB2821. Expanding accessibility to menstrual products is a critical step to advance equity in our schools. Providing health care in all educational settings is a powerful way to ensure generations of young adults are empowered to plan for their futures and lead healthier lives.

Additionally the lack of access to period products is a clear form of gender-based exclusion and oppression. Period products are vital for the physical and mental health, well-being and full participation of menstruators, including but not limited to girls, women, transgender and nonbinary individuals. Failure to consider period needs is a form of sex-based discrimination that disproportionately affects menstruators.

Please support SB2821 and expand accessibility to menstrual products for our keiki. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for hearing this important bill.

Sincerely,
Rozlyn Calderon
Regional Field Organizer PPAA HI



TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

DATE/LOCATION: February 18, 2022; 10:10 a.m., Conference Room 211/Video Conference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2821 SD 1 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

We support SB 2821 which requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses, requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public 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 **SB 2821 SD 1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



February 17, 2022

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: S.B. 2821, S.D. 1, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

Hearing: Friday, February 18, 2022, 10:10 a.m., Room 211 (videoconference)

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“HWL”) **supports S.B. 2821, S.D. 1**, 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.

S.B. 2821, S.D. 1 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.



HAWAI' APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of

Chaslynn-Nicole Kapuaonalani Gaspar

The University Of Hawaii - PHOCUSED, Hawai'i

February 17, 2022

TO: Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Gilbert Keith-Again, Vice-Chair

FROM: Chaslynn-Nicole K. Gaspar, **PHOCUSED with Hawai'i Appleseed Center For Law & Economic Justice**

SUBJECT: Requesting the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to students on all Hawaii public and charter school campuses. Appropriates funding to DOE and appropriates funding to the charter school commission.

Hearing: February 18, 2022, at 10:10 pm Via videoconference - Written Testimony Only.

I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB 2821**, which genuinely passed out the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is essential because I have witnessed many women on the Wai'anae coast, significantly in poverty, experiencing a lack of resources. Furthermore, an estimated 25% of women in the United States could not afford to pay for menstrual products before the pandemic. My colleague Nikki-Ann Yee, co-founder of Ma'i Movement Hawaii, stated, "I never thought period poverty would touch our shores. But the more I looked into the issue in our state and found such a lack of resources, the more there was a strong call to action." (Yee). We, community advocates, hope this proclamation will lead to policy changes to make these feminine hygiene products accessible for everyone. Statewide statistics in a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Mai Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a

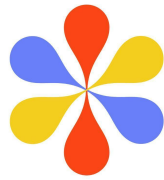
lack of accessibility to period products. Furthermore, there is evidence in our islands that students are using period products beyond the recommended safe time, resorting to unhygienic alternatives, and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. Consequently, this bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty that requires low investment. The bill addresses this issue and promotes common public health goals, fundamental equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2821.

We have been collaborating on advocacy about critical procurement and service delivery issues that directly impact our communities. PHOCUSED is a nonpartisan project of the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. It comprises health and human service organizations and their people across Hawai`i.

I genuinely appreciate the consideration of the passage of SB 2821.

Mahalo, for your consideration.



**alliance for
PERIOD
supplies**

LATE

February 17, 2022

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 208
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SB 2821 – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz:

The Alliance for Period Supplies is proud to support Senate Bill 2821, 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, SB 2821 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.

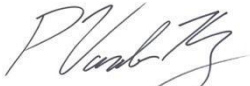
By providing menstrual products in schools, Hawaii helps ensure its students have equal access to education and are empowered to reach their full potential, irrespective of their gender or economic status. Research shows that students lacking access to menstrual products experience



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.

SB 2821 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



LATE

Kamehameha Schools®

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Time: 10:10 a.m.

Date: February 18, 2022

Where: Conference Room 211

TESTIMONY

By Kau'i Burgess

Director, Community & Government Relations

RE: SB 2821, SD1 Relating to Menstrual Equality

E ka Luna Ho'omalu Dela Cruz, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalu Keith-Agaran, a me nā lālā o ke Kōmike o nā Loa'a a me nā Ho'olilo o ka 'Aha Kenekoa, aloha kākou!

Kamehameha Schools **supports** SB 2821, SD1, which requires the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses and also requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. This measure also makes appropriations.

In our support of Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and our work with Brandy-Lee and Nikki-Ann Yee, co-founders of Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, we've learned and recognized that though there are many challenges that our children and youth face in Hawai'i, menstrual inequity does not need to be one of them.

According to the 2021 Study by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, 26.1% of survey participants began menstruating in elementary school and 62.8% began menstruating in middle school. Furthermore, 21.6% of respondents reported missing a full day of school because they did not have access to period products. Advancing this bill will remove menstruation inequity as a barrier to the continuity of education of public school students throughout Hawai'i.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an educational organization striving to restore our people through education and advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

Hānai i ke keiki, ola ka lāhui; nurture the child and the people thrive. **Please advance this measure.**



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Community Health
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COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Food Security Coalition

Date: February 17, 2022

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Support SB 2821, S.D.1, Relating to Menstrual Equity

Hrg: February 18, 2022 at 10:10 AM via Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ is in **support of SB 2821, S.D. 1**, which seeks to address period poverty by making menstrual products available free of charge on all public school campuses and public charter school campuses.

Lack of access to menstrual products prevents many menstruating youth from fully participating in society and school. In a recent survey conducted by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i,ⁱⁱ 42% of respondents reported having to miss class or leave school early because they did not have period products, with 21.6% reporting having missed a full day of school because they did not have access to period products. Cost was the most commonly identified barrier to obtaining menstrual products.

Additionally, period poverty can have devastating health consequences for those who experience it. Reusing or wearing menstrual products for too long can lead to infection, which can increase the risk for serious health problems, such as cervical cancer or infertility. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2821, S.D. 1.

Mahalo,

Amanda Fernandes, JD
Policy and Advocacy Director

ⁱ Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

ⁱⁱ 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-UnderstandingPeriod-Poverty-in-Hawai%CA%BBi-Report.pdf>.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:10:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the WAM Committee:

I am a resident of Makiki neighborhood in Honolulu and strongly support of SB2821.

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.

My younger self would have liked to have this kind of legislation in place while I was attending school. The least I can do is provide the opportunity for current and future enrolled female students.

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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:21:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Diana Harvey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing to support SB2821. Hawai'i leads the nation with the highest cost of living. Many families must make the choice between purchasing period products and buying food. A [study](#) in 2021 by the Ma'i Movement and the Hawai'I State Commission on the Status of Women revealed that 50% of the respondents missed school or work and 64.3% felt social and emotional distress due to lack of access to period products to manage a period. By providing easy access to period products we are giving girls and boys equal access to education.

Mahalo,

FOR: SB 2821 Relating to Menstrual Equality

COMMITTEE: Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Royanne Santo

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Honorable Members,

My name is Royanne Santo and I am a student at The University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am writing in **strong support of SB2821** which would require the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. As well as requiring the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses.

Menstrual products may be difficult for some students to afford or have access to. Having these products readily available, free of charge in school bathrooms could help alleviate some of the economic strain that comes with having a period. Without easy access to these products students may feel forced to miss class or be under constant stress or fear because of the possibility of leakage. The goal should be to prevent students from missing class, sports, or from participating in extracurricular activities due to an unexpected period during a school day.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strongly support of SB2821

Sincerely,

Royanne Santo

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:51:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I strongly support SB 2821, SD1. 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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 1:31:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Cynthia Reves	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Cynthia Reves. I teach English and Journalism at McKinley High School. I urge you to pass this legislation and create menstrual equality in our schools. This bill will have a positive impact on our young people and their families.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 1:37:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Sharing my previous testimony and emphasizing support:

Aloha Hawai`i Senate EDU and WAM committee members,

This testimony is written in SUPPORT of SB 2821 which addresses “ the ongoing and devastating effects of menstrual inequity within the state of Hawai’i by requiring the Department of Education and State Public Charter School Commission to promote gender and education equity through ensuring the availability of safe and free menstrual products to students within all public and charter school campuses. “

As a retired elementary menstruating educator, there are a plethora of stories which I could offer from my experiences personally and of my students to try and convey to this committee the extent that menstruation affects a school/ classroom. The body has no schedule for menstruation. Even with the best preparation, there’s not a person who has found themselves unprepared at some time. During my 40 years of teaching, countless times students and colleagues found it necessary to visit a drawer in my desk, as did I. It is why I am pleased to see the bill covers ALL public schools and I hope all grades. The youngest student I knew was 7 in my second grade classroom and the oldest a high school “late bloomer” who had no idea what to do. In this testimony, I would also like to include my own experiences. It might seem amazing that at this age, I can still remember the trauma of bleeding through my clothes in 9th grade biology class or being laughed at in the PE locker room for not having supplies like others had. One of the parts of this menstrual issue that is often neglected is the impact it has on educators and students due to the daily schedule. As an elementary teacher, it is hard to get to the restroom with students in class, breaks are few and far between. Like students, teachers sometimes have to resort to measures that are not always the best. I remember one time when in my classroom (a portable with no bathroom), telling the students that I was going to get supplies from our room closet. Actually, I quickly went in and used paper to hopefully hold until our lunch break. Not the best idea, but we do what we have to do. In addition to having free supplies available, it would be great to have awareness that people’s needs are all different and adjust the system’s paths to creating a safer environment for menstruating folks.

Why is this bill important? It takes the first steps to building a safer, equitable place within our public schools. It provides a chance for people to learn that menstruation is a bodily function just like others. This bill helps us provide place-based solutions and understandings on menstruation and dismiss the stigma attached to it. For way too long, menstruating humans have suffered trauma that lasts a lifetime. This bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and educational equity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT for this bill: SB2821

Cheryl Burghardt

Retired DOE educator

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 1:56:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
James Younger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As our state grapples with increased poverty a number of measures need to be taken to protect the dignity and participation of numerous groups. One group, numbering HALF THE POPULATION, bears the additional burden of purchasing products to keep them safe and healthy during menstration. These women are our future. Their participation in education needs to be a high priority. Please help them stay in school by providing them with the hygienic products they need in order to thrive in school.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 2:43:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
ace	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Period poverty is a huge problem, not just for women but for trans men and non-binary people as well. Lots of trans men say that during their periods they feel lots of dysphoria, and feel really bad about themselves. They even say they feel dirty, contributing to them facing more stigma thanks to the media, not to mention how our country is still reliant on its more “traditional” ways.

Because of this, it’s important that we make sure that we give these people the things that they need. Schools claim to care a lot about a lot about students and their health, but refuse to give the bare minimum to those who need period protics.

I have had to go to the nurse’s office multiple times, which makes me lose time out on my education. I have also had panic attacks not knowing where I should go, or what to do when I get my period in school.

If schools cannot give me (as well as the rest of the people who bleed) the things that they need, then the education system cannot claim to care about all of their students.

Aloha Senate

Hi, my name is Brycelee Rio, and I am a student from Ilima Intermediate, and I am a non bleeding ally. Please support SB2821, and I believe that all schools should have free period products for people to menstrate. The fact people use other products like diapers, leafs, newspapers, and toilet paper is ridiculous because of the schools not having free menstruation products. The pricing for menstruation products is horrendous because the pricing for a 12 pack of pads is 10-20 dollars. How do you think a girl would be able to survive a whole week without 7 pads or even more. This is why I strongly urge the senate to pass SB2821 to insure equity and dignity to menstruation students. Thank you for reading and supporting SB2821.

Aloha Senate.

“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 SB 2821. 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 Senate to pass SB 2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for reading and supporting SB 2821.

Telia Hao-Aunese

Hawaii Legislators

Period Poverty

16 February 2022

The Price We Pay For Periods

Hello, Hawaii Legislators. My name is Telia Hao-Aunese, and I attend Ilima Intermediate middle school. I support the SB-2821 SD-1 bill, and I'm here to talk to you about an equity problem which affects everyone, including yourselves.

The issue on the table has to do with periods. They're normal cycles that usually happen once a month for menstruators. People who get them need the right products to keep themselves healthy when going through their period. However, there are kids in Hawaii, as well as other states, who don't have access to these menstruation products. This has to do with period poverty, an issue that affects everybody living on this Earth. There are many problems floating around when it comes to this topic, but the ones I want to address have a lot to do with periods within youth.

Menstruators who started young, such as myself, have had to deal with the struggle of maintaining school, mental health, and periods all in one. These factors can lead up to an insane amount of stress, and it can be really hard to balance everything in the span of one week. "Stress situations can have a powerful effect on the menstrual cycle including the amount of bleeding, the level of cramps, and, in some cases, your period could stop altogether." (Taylor, 10) As this piece of evidence explains, the stress of keeping up with everything in your life, (especially when you consider the seemingly never ending blood flow) having to deal with it can come with

some serious side effects. With this, it's hard for menstruators to function in their day-to-day lives when the anxiety can kick in at any given time.

Stress alone is one of the biggest reasons menstruators miss out on school days, but, what about the mental stigma that trails along period poverty? Students who don't have access to period products miss school because they do not want to use 'other' resources. When they cannot afford products like pads, tampons or cups, menstruating youth are compelled to use unsafe items such as toilet paper, newspaper, diapers, socks, and sometimes even leaves!

It doesn't stop there; if they're not afraid of the lack of the right supplies, they're worried about the embarrassment it'll cause. Yes, the embarrassment of going through a *natural, necessary* process. Most students feel ashamed to go through this cycle every month, but even more so when at school. The fear of bleeding through their clothes, asking for supplies from a teacher or a friend, and even going to the bathroom to change out their products (assuming they had any to begin with)— it all just adds onto the stigma they have to deal with, consuming them for the school day.

If you've got a wife, a daughter, or even a granddaughter going through menstrual cycles, these issues are sure to affect them as well. Would you want them to continue living in this misery? In this shame? I don't think so.

So, we've got a few options. "Boston public schools tackled this issue by giving students access to free products in an attempt to create 'menstrual equity.'...Though it's a step in the right direction, advocates say the supplies should be as readily available in the bathrooms as toilet paper." (Rosa, 4) As this piece says, Boston is just one of the very few states who have taken a shot at period equity; we should too. Making products free in schools is just one way to take the first step. Another would be to educate students and youth about periods, which would normalize

menstruation. This would bring the stigma levels down, as well as free menstruating youth from the mindset of associating periods with embarrassment. Hopefully, now you understand the reasons why we need to change for the better, and some of the ways we could bring those dreams to life. So yes, while period poverty *is* a women's issue, it's also an ***everybody*** issue and we need to fix it together.

CITATIONS:

Source #1:

Taylor, Madeline. "Stressful Situations and the Factors Affecting Menstrual Cycle." *Madeline Taylor*, Sunday Scaries, 19 June 2019,
www.healtheuropa.eu/stressful-situations-and-the-factors-affecting-menstrual-cycle/92054.

Source #2:

White, Krishna. "All About Periods." *Krishna Wood White*, Nemours, 17 Oct. 2018,
www.kidshealth.org/en/teens/menstruation.html.

Source #3:

Rosa, Shawna De La. "Report Finds 'Period Poverty' a Top Reason Why Girls Miss School." *Shawna De La Rosa*, K-12, 21 Oct. 2019,
www.k12dive.com/news/report-finds-period-poverty-a-top-reason-girls-miss-school/565424.

Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Riezel Nicole Escoto and I am an 8th grade student at Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach. I strongly support SB2821 SD1.

It is common for people to experience several menstrual effects while they go through their monthly cycle, such as muscle aches, joint pain, headaches, abdominal cramps, constipation, lower back pain, fatigue, etc. While this may seem like an insignificant thing, it impacts their lives in many ways. It's bold and inspiring that they choose to go on with their lives despite it all. So why can't our government be bold as well?

Passing SB2821 SD1 would be a big step for all of us who menstruate. I believe this is true because not only will it be convenient for all of us but it would also make a great impact/example for other states.

You're probably wondering how passing one bill about menstrual equity can make a difference. Well for instance by passing SB2821 SD1 it can boost up the publicity of our state because according to npr's article titled "The case for free tampons and pads in schools" it states, "This year, bills related to period equity have been introduced in 37 states, according to Women's Voices For The Earth, a nonprofit advocacy group. But as of this fall, only five states require schools to provide menstrual products." Now knowing that similar bills to SB2821 SD1 have been introduced in 37 states, only 5 states have passed bills that require schools to provide menstrual products. If we pass this bill, Hawaii can be counted as one of the only states to pass a period equity bill.

Now going back to the effects that people experience when they're menstruating according to an article made by global citizen in 2018 it says, "Around the world, at least 20% of women and girls experience dysmenorrhea painful enough to disrupt their daily life and as many as 176 million women experience endometriosis, a painful affliction where tissue typically found in the uterus grows on other female reproductive organs and peels." In the article it also refers back to a different passage that also states, "In the original article, published by Quartz two years ago, University College London reproductive health professor John Guillebaud said cramping pain is as "almost as bad as having a heart attack."

Keeping this in mind some people are likely to just stay at home because of how painful it is. But for those who choose to power through the pain and still go to school/work another dilemma

occurs. Period products, specifically how accessible period products are at school or work because most states don't require schools to provide period products students and employees have to worry about accidentally bleeding through their clothes. And when they bleed through their clothes, it makes them feel insecure about themselves and feel ashamed and disgusted even though periods are a natural thing that occurs.

So in order to prevent themselves from bleeding through their clothes its said from a passage from Hawaii Public Radio, "Khara Jabola-Carolus, the executive director for the commission, says, "Our youth, our students, are using newspapers, baby diapers and plants in place of period supplies." " You read/heard it correctly, newspapers, baby diapers, and even plants. This issue is so severe that it's gotten to the point where a 13 year old thinks it better to use newspapers as a pad instead of facing humiliation from people just because they couldn't get a pad when they need one.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:01:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kristina Shimokawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of this bill.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:10:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Liana White	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821.

I am a public school teacher who has taught in Hawai'i since 2004. I am also a proud product of the Hawaii State DOE system. I feel like I have always been invested personally in public education and I honestly believe that there is no greater responsibility of the state than to provide quality education for our keiki. Covering the needs of our students is an important step towards making this happen.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:12:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Pana Kia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is an important issue that deserves to be taken seriously. Menstrual equity is key for equal access to education. Please do not take this lightly.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:14:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

This statement is in regards to SB2821 SD1 to provide free menstrual products to all students in our public school system in Hawaii. As a teacher in a public middle school here on Kaua'i, I wholeheartedly support this bill. It is no secret that in our public schools there is a wide gap that exists between families that "have" and families that "have not". Many of our families struggle to make ends meet each month and many simply cannot afford to purchase menstrual supplies for their children. Students miss school or use unsafe practices to get by. By providing menstrual products for any student that needs them, we are insuring that all students, regardless of their financial background, have access to these necessary supplies.

I compare menstrual products to food. Right now we provide free meals to our disadvantaged students. We need to do the same for menstrual products because both are essential to a healthy student. Please support this bill to provide free menstrual products to our students in Hawaii. Mahalo for your time!

Sincerely,

Kevin Matsunaga

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:39:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please approve this bill, to help girls in our schools have necessary hygiene products for menstruation. Let's remove the shame and assure healthy choices are available for girls who need them. Thank you for your consideration and efforts to assure women's equality.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 3:54:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ashley de Coligny	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm a resident of Kaneohe and a mother of two, and I am writing in strong support of SB2821, requiring the Hawaii DOE to provide free menstrual products to students on campus. Nobody should have to miss school for lack of these resources, and it will help reduce the very outdated stigma around menstruation. Thank you to the founders of Ma'i Movement Hawai'i for raising awareness on this topic, providing data and leadership, and encouraging the public to testify. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 4:21:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Koryne Acob	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill as a teacher in support of all my menstruating students. Thank you!

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of SB 2821 SD: Relating to menstrual equality. My name is Anne Alves and I am a sixth year HIDOE teacher, teaching at a Title I school on the Leeward Coast.

Senate President Ron Kouchi, in his opening day remarks, highlighted an alarming quote about this topic: “if we have to make a decision between buying food for their family or getting the right products for their teenager, then the food will win.’ He continues to say, “That should not be a choice that our people have to make. We need to ensure that we’re giving them every tool to allow them to succeed.” This is now the third consecutive year that this bill is up for consideration. What is the hold up about?

It’s simple: biological females from lower income households are at a severe disadvantage when it comes to having their most basic human needs met. Because of this, they are being put at an unfair disadvantage academically. Many students will simply miss school if they do not have a secure way of taking care of their menstrual needs. They miss out on valuable class time and miss opportunities for social and emotional connection with their peers.

Yes, some teachers do offer free sanitary pads in our classrooms. But why does this too have to come out of our pockets? Breakfast and lunch are offered for free or at a reduced rate for students in need because it is a basic necessity. Everyone knows that a hungry child will not be able to achieve success in the classroom. Sanitary pads are just as necessary as food. Please do the right thing and approve this measure.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anne Alves

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 4:44:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dian Hermes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Dian Athena Hermes. I am a teacher of 21 years and this bill is a NO. BRAINER.

I can't tell you the number of times I have had to provide menstration supplies to students, even in the elementary school level. My 4th and 5th grade students, horribly embarassed, or afraid have often missed school because they either can't afford products, or they don't have extra at school and have fear of needing them during school.

Prior to the pandemic, I led a 4th Grade Hawai'i Island Trip. Every year, I had to provide products out of my own, limited salary since the school would not provide them or allow reimbursments.

Please do not withhold our kaikamahine (girls) from access to education equally to their male counter parts.

Mahalo,

Dian Hermes

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:12:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mike Landes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2821 SD1. My name is Mike Landes, and I am a teacher at Lahainaluna High School, the husband of an elementary teacher at Princess Nahienaena Elementary School, and the father of two public school students. I am also the HSTA Maui Chapter President. In my work as a high school teacher, I have unfortunately had a number of interactions with female students who need access to menstrual products but do not have any, who then have no recourse other than to go around the classroom asking if anyone has any to spare, or to go to a teacher who is known to have free supplies available that they purchased with their own money out of the goodness of their own heart. As the father of a 9 year old daughter, I am dreading the day that she comes home telling me a story of personal humiliation when she finds herself without the necessary hygiene products at school. I know of students who told me sheepishly that they did not attend school because they were in such a situation, and chose being absent and avoiding the embarrassment rather than coming to school and keeping up with their education that day. Nobody should have to face these situations. This is a matter of basic human decency, educational opportunity, and gender equity. Please, do the right thing and vote in support of Senate Bill 2821 SD1.

Mahalo for your time,

Mike Landes

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:29:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Daphne okunaga	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in support of SB2821 because I have seen girls not have access to feminine hygiene products and it breaks my heart to think of them. Students have enough weight on their shoulders with school, work/activities, family obligations, etc. and worrying about immediate access to hygiene products shouldn't be one of them. We would never question providing soap or toilet paper for students to feel safe and clean and to me, this is no different!

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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:32:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kayla Enos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Members of the Committee

My name is Kayla Enos. I am writing in strong support of bill SB2821 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

I have suffered from lack of menstrual supplies at school, and I was a very privileged teen who had the resources but didn't always know when my period was coming. Or planned for it and it came early because you know mother nature likes to surprise us occasionally. Even though I had an abundance of resources at home there were still embarrassing moments for me. No teen should have to face the shame of using toilet paper/paper towel or whatever they could find because they were not prepared and nothing at school is provided. Not to mention the poor hygiene of walking around in menstrual blood all day or with a jacket covering your shorts because you don't have the proper supplies. It is humiliating. I have missed class, sports, been embarrassed, ashamed and so much more. If the state could help a little by offering menstrual supplies when things like this occurred, it would have made being a teen girl a lot less stressful.

If I was not privileged and had the means at home having a menstrual cycle would have made things 1000 times more difficult. I probably wouldn't even go to school because I wouldn't know how to clean things up. I would stay home for the duration so I could at least shower or wash off in my own home. I know there are girls that do have to do this and miss ample time of school and that is unfair. They cannot help that they have a menstrual cycle or that they cannot afford the supplies. Providing to supplies to these girls would at the very least make them feel a little more comfortable because they know they will be clean and the proper hygiene and products that might not even be at home for them

I strongly support this bill for the reasons stated above.

*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 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 SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo nui loa!

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:35:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Julie Uyeno-Pidot	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, committee members.

I'm submitting written testimony in strong support of SB2821 SD1 (Relating to Menstrual Equity). As the mother of a daughter in middle school, I know how crucial it is for students who menstruate to have access to hygienic and appropriate menstrual products.

A survey conducted by the nonprofit organization Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that eight out of 10 students who menstruate lack adequate access to menstrual products. These students may use the limited menstrual products that they do have beyond the recommended window of time or make do with newspaper, diapers, folder paper, napkins, socks, toilet paper, or rags. These unsafe practices pose serious health and safety risks. Other students facing period poverty may skip school altogether.

This bill gives us the opportunity to make school a truly welcoming place for all students. By appropriating funds to the DOE and State Public Charter School Commission, free menstrual products can be provided to all students who need them.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:40:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shereen Doi Acorda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable members of the committee,

My name is Shereen and I am a Licensed Social Worker on Kauai. I am writing in strong support of bill SB2821 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

- **Learning more about period poverty through the Mai movement organization and the negative impact it contributes to learning outcomes has been shocking as menstrating is not a choice.**
- **Period products are health hygiene products. Menstruation is a bodily function that is just as important as other bodily functions.**
- **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 SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:43:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kehau Camara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith Agaran and members of the committee,

My name is Kēhau Camara and I have been a teacher for 24 years at Ānuenu in the Honolulu District. I am submitting testimony for Senate Bill 2821 SD1 on menstrual equality.

Within my 24 years of teaching, my students have come to me for menstrual feminine products because they cannot afford it and or missed school because they do not have menstrual feminine products.

Please support bill SB2821 SD1 so that our students can persevere without this pressure and stress of trying to figure out how they can get feminine products so that they can come to school.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit my written testimony in support of SB2821 SD1.

‘O au iho nō,

Kēhau Camara

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:43:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michelle Ige	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:49:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sarah Starr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony regarding my support of senate bill SB 2821 SD1. This bill should already be a law, and I am surprised that it is not. My teenage daughter recently faced not having money for pads at school. Thankfully, her school office assistant covered the cost for her that day. But what if she hadn't? My daughter would have faced possible shame and humiliation, and would have had to call me to leave my job as a SPED teacher to go and assist her. She hadn't forgotten, it had just taken her by surprise. It wasn't her fault. I believe that this will affect many girls that may miss school and stay home when their cycle occurs. Our girls and young women absolutely deserve this!

Please support SB2821 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sarah Starr

SPED Pre-K teacher

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 6:06:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Annie Queirolo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Absolutely support this!

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 6:29:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michael Press	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Michael Press and I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate on Oahu in Ewa Beach. I am asking you to support SB 2821. By supporting this bill and provide these vital school supplies you are supporting the keiki of Hawaii.

Schools that did not provide period products had students that were 2.48 times more likely to miss school and 1.68 times more likely to leave school early than a respondent in a school that did provide period products. Students that were unable to afford period products were 5.89 times more likely to miss school, 5.82 times likely to be late to school, and 4.14 times more likely to leave school early compared to those that could afford period products

Please support this bill and our future.

Mahalo Nui,

Michael Press

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 6:39:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am continuing my support for SB 2821 making period products free in our Public and Charter Schools. This bill actively addresses menstrual inequality and provides an end to period poverty within our school systems. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 6:54:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jamie Kapana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Jamie Kapana and I am a resident of Kapolei. I am testifying in support of SB2821 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. Das I remember how ashamed I felt if I needed to ask for period products while also going to school. It was a hard for me to adjust and it made it even harder during that time of the month.

I know first hand 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 SB2821 to make period products free for students so they don't have to worry about running into that situation. Many my 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!

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

I am testifying in support of SB2821 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. As I remember how ashamed I felt if I needed to ask for period products while also going to school. It was a hard for me to adjust and it made it even harder during that time of the month.

I know first hand 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 SB2821 to make period products free for students so they don't have to worry about running into that situation. Many my 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!

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 7:01:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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 16, 2022

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

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means 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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 7:03:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Piikea Kalakau-Baarde	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the WAM Committee,

My name is Piikea and I am an educator. I am testifying in support of SB 2821 SD1 because I have both experienced and witnessed menstrual inequity as a student and teacher, and the students who have periods in our public schools deserve period products free of cost.

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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 7:23:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nalani Simpson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

“Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Nalani and I am a resident of Hawai'i. I strongly support **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important to support and normalize young girls who are going through their menstrual cycles during a time of their lives that is so sensitive, scary and often embarrassing. Without proper access to period products it can be a soul destroying event which should otherwise be celebrated. **PERIOD PRODUCTS ARE A NECESSITY, NOT A LUXURY. PERIOD POVERTY HAS NO PLACE IN HAWAI'IS PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (OR ELSEWHERE)**. We need to support our girls of the islands so they can grow up to become strong, confident women who may contribute back to the positive growth of our islands, it's communities and people. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.”

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 7:39:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Ways And Means Committee

Friday, February 18, 2022

Support for S. B. No. 2821 Relating to Menstrual Equality

Aloha

I am writing in strong support of S.B. 2821.

We must do better for the young people of Hawai'i. I was aware of period poverty projects distributing menstrual hygiene products to those in our houseless community and local prisons. I was shocked to learn that there was a need in our local public and charter schools.

Organizations like the Ma'i Movement have given me hope. They have stepped up to provide products for our menstruating citizens, and more importantly they have brought much needed attention to this situation. Through their work with dedicated educators , they have inspired students to take part in our legislative process.

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

Mahalo

Stacie M. Burke

Aiea, Hawai'i

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:10:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
William Kern	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is William Kern and as a longtime resident of Honolulu I am writing in strong support of bill SB2821 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

Please take this opportunity to address a relatively hidden, but important, health hygiene equity issue for our female students. The benefits far exceed the costs, and ensure that our youth can stay focused on their education as each day's priority.

I strongly urge this committee to pass bill SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo nui loa!

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:14:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Katrina Karl and I am a teacher at Waipahu High School. I am testifying in strong support of SB2821, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. I have seen the benefits of providing our students with free menstrual products firsthand through connecting our school with the organization Ma'i Movement. I urge you to pass this bill to support our students, especially those in need, in maintaining the hygiene and dignity that everyone deserves. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Katrina Karl

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Olivia Cornejo

Friday, February 18, 2022

Support for S.B. No. 2821, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY

Dear committee members, my name is Olivia Cornejo and I am a social worker earning my master's degree at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, specializing in health. I write to you today to offer testimony in **strong support** of S.B. No. 2821.

Menstrual products are essential hygiene products that directly impact the health and wellbeing of menstruators. Without proper menstrual products, students may suffer emotionally, socially, and physically by resorting to unhygienic practices such as reusing menstrual products, using products beyond the recommended time, and turning to unsafe alternatives that risk infections and illnesses. Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the nation and in 2019, the Department of Education determined that 47% of public school students were "economically disadvantaged" which can affect the access a student has to appropriate menstrual products. Period poverty should not be a factor that effects a students ability to learn and thrive in the school environment.

Just like access to food and other needs-based products public schools provide (like toilet paper, soap, and water), economic status should not stand in the way of students' access to essential hygiene products within the school setting. The Hawai'i State Department of Education's core values include a "Commitment to Equity & Excellence" stating that "Students succeed when their specific needs are met..." this should include providing products for menstruation, a natural bodily process that individuals have no control over.

I urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 2821 and uphold the Hawai'i State Department of Education's commitment to equity by providing for the needs of menstruators so that all students can focus on reaching their full potential. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Olivia Cornejo

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:24:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dustin Hirayama	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Dustin Hirayama and I am a resident of Kapolei. I am testifying in support of SB2821 because I grew up in a household with my mother and two younger sisters and never had to worry about the challenges associated with menstruation.

I can't imagine my mother or sisters in school and in need of products without having access to them. I can only imagine the stress, anxiety, and embarrassment one would feel.

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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:47:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Damian Moya	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Committee members,

I write to you in **strong support** of SB2821. I believe that is important to promote equity within our school system, and that extends to ensuring that all children have access to adequate hygiene products regardless of their economic or gender status. The public school system already provides this in the form of food, handsoap, toilet paper, and other amenities that are needed for a healthy and supportive atmosphere, and I believe this should extend to menstrual products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 8:54:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
angela Ikeda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a former educator I have experienced the weight of unnecessary hardships and how they can impact our youth. Providing menstrual care for our students should not be a privilege but a right. Worrying about how to care for their bodies should not be an obstacle our students face when their primary duty at school is to obtain an education.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:05:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jay Bumanglag	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please vote in support of Senate Bill 2821.

Mahalo,

Jay Bumanglag

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:16:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Victoria Zupancic	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB2821

It is 2022. All women reading this testimony are wondering why we must beg to ensure young women have access to free menstrual products. We all get periods, and honestly, they're not a great experience. It's garbage, and we often have to show up feeling nauseous, bloated, and in physical pain. Place yourself in the shoes of a teenage girl showing up to school trying her best through all of that, and facing the possible experience of bleeding through her pants. Only a monster would think that's acceptable and vote no.

Give students tampons and pads.

Victoria Zupancic

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Friday, February 18, 2022, 10:10 A.M

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Conference Room 211

Aloha e Senators Dela Cruz and Keith-Agaran,

My name is Jessica Conner, and I am submitting this testimony in strong **support of SB2821**, which aims to require the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to all students on all public school and public charter school campuses.

As a wahine and current educator, it is important for the state to recognize the severity of having menstrual products available for our young girls and transgender students. Having a period is a barrier of its own when attending school. Students should not need to worry about the availability of supplies they need to get through the day without leaking through their clothes or using unsanitary replacements. Too many young students miss school because of the lack of resources to remain comfortable during their menstrual cycle. Passing this bill not only provides all students with free menstrual products, it also helps to pave a path to student academic success by eliminating a huge barrier.

Mahalo ā nui for taking the time to read my testimony. Me ke aloha,

Jessica Conner, BSW

jmconner@hawaii.edu

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:27:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Karina Koda	Testifying for Department of Education	Support	No

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill relating to provision of menstrual products to students. Many of our students cannot afford or do not have access to these products. By allowing these students to go without these products, we put their education at risk. Students come late, leave early, miss classes and whole days of school. We allow the punishment of our menstruating population of students because we fail to act in providing them with basic healthcare. It is time to stop forcing teachers and health aids to purchase these items for students.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:37:51 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Hope McKeen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

E kāko‘o nō i nā wahine!!!

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:51:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Russell Josephson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for consideration of this bill.

I have spent a lot of time at legislatures and seen a lot of proposed legislation. Some bills are just so obviously deserving of support that there cannot be much discussion. This is such a bill.

How can we in good faith ask parents to make a choice between basic needs? How can we look young girls in the eye if we cannot even support them in their most basic needs? And let's remember that some of the girls are new to this phase of life. Things are embarrassing and confusing enough for girls entering puberty without having to have to choose between staying home and coming to school.

This is pretty basic stuff. I am sure you will support the girls in need.

Thank you.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 10:43:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Catherine Ritti	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB2821. As a Hawaii public school educator, I have witnessed first hand how lack of access to period products impacts young women and all students who menstruate. Students often have had to miss class time to cross our large campus to get access to period products in the office, for which they had to pay. As a result, I often would offer my own period products if a student felt comfortable enough to share this need with me. I also knew of a student who was placed on a list of students who were not to participate in extracurriculars because she owed obligations to the school--these obligations were 25 cents for period products. This reveals a serious lack of educational equity. Luckily, our school is currently participating in Ma'i Movement's program that offers free period products to students and I now get to witness how offering access to period products removes barriers for our girls and menstruating students. Students don't have to walk far now because products are available in many classrooms across the school and they know where to get them without having to ask publicly. I hope to see these same burdens removed for all of our menstruating students across the state through the passing of this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Catherine Ritti

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 10:46:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kaleopomaikai M Kauahi-Daniels	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Pomai Kauahi-Daniels, I am 16 and a junior at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. I am writing in strong support of SB2821, requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses. As a student who experiences menstruation and attends school, I have been personally affected by the lack of menstrual products available. One experience I have had with this issue was a regular day at school. I had been sitting in class with my best friend when she had alerted me that she had bled through her shorts. The embarrassment she felt was pushed to me. I could feel a sense of panic and wanted to help. I luckily had some products in my bag to offer but noticed that if I wasn't there she would have been in a very scary position. I strongly urge this committee to pass SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:22:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and WAM Committee Members,

I am testifying in support of **SB2821 SD1** 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)

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:38:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brandon Cha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2821.

I am a high school teacher in the Leeward district of Oahu. As a male, I do not know what experiences my female students have to go through in terms of menstrual hygiene, but I know that it can play a very important part in their lives, sometimes affecting their school attendance. I want to teach in a school system that supports all of my students' needs, both academic and health related, regardless of each student's financial circumstances.

The passage of this bill will help alleviate financial burdens on students for whom good menstrual hygiene is a necessary component of being able to participate in meaningful learning. Such burdens should not stand in the way of participation in quality education and these appropriations will make a tangible impact on students' lives.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill 2821.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Support for SB2821
February 17, 2022

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Aloha Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Laura de Leon and I am a current graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I reside in the county of Maui. I am writing in support of SB2821 requesting the Department of Education to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

The issue of menstrual inequality is an important conversation to end period poverty. From my personal experience in school, I have experienced the embarrassment of being without adequate and necessary period products due to financial strain and situational circumstances which led to missing meaningful classes. I strongly believe no student should miss valuable class time or experience embarrassment from lack of access to period products.

According to the State of Hawai'i Department of Education, there are more than 45,000 students with periods between the ages of 10-18 registered in Hawai'i public non-charter schools. These students need access to clean period products because people with periods cannot opt out of having their periods. Additionally, students' overall wellbeing is at stake as menstruators are resorting to using other items such as school paper, rags, newspapers, and socks when they do not have period products. This can open the possibility of deadly infections that are completely preventable. With the passing of this bill, the invitation for equity and dignity is welcomed for menstruators because menstruating is as important as any bodily function.

I strongly urge this committee to pass SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo nui loa!

Sincerely,
Laura de Leon
MSW Candidate
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

February 17, 2022

Aloha Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the 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 SB2821 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 SB2821 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

Thursday
February 17, 2022

To the Hawaii State Legislative Body,

As a Hawaii Department of Education seventh grade English Language Arts teacher, I am very deeply concerned that this bill gets passed. I have recently had a student who had their first experience with menstruation. The first barrier in which I had to face, as a male teacher, was that the student was very embarrassed. They did not even wish to speak to me directly. They asked permission to go to the restroom, like any other day. However, after a few minutes another student told me that they just received a message from the student who went to the restroom, and asked to speak to me outside of the classroom. The individual who received the message from the student who was already in the restroom quietly explained the situation to me. They asked if they may go to the restroom to support the student with a feminine hygiene product. Naturally, I allowed that student to go to help the first student.

So, here is the point. Menstruation is a natural process of the human body. No young woman chooses it. No one asks for it for Christmas. It is simply something that occurs as part of the natural female biological process. So, I had one student who was deeply embarrassed by something that she should never have had to feel embarrassed about.¹ Womanhood is the key to human life and perpetual existence. Moreover, I now had **two** students who were missing class time to complete writing assignments due to the feeling of embarrassment and our students not having readily available access to feminine hygiene products. It is a matter of education equity for our female students. It is unfair that our female students miss valuable classroom time and instruction due to a process of nature, an occurrence in which they have no control over.

We need to start thinking of feminine hygiene products as school supplies, because with the lack of readily available access to these products on school campuses, our female students are in danger of missing instruction. This is an equity issue when it comes to our female students. It is our responsibility to support them. Thank you.

Sincerely,
A Hawaii Teacher

¹ We also need to educate the public to be supportive of women and not to make them feel embarrassed by their womanhood, but that is a point for future testimony.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 5:24:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
eric iwasaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

good morning,

I do not have a daughter but after reading some articles where some of our students don't go to school because of issues relating to being a young woman, this is an easy fix just like we are solving the problem of students not having enough to eat to learn

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 5:46:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2821 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 overseeing our Women's Center among other departments, 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 and HB2249 earlier this month and I am grateful that your committee has agreed to hear this important bill on this 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. Women do not have the choice the opt-out of having their period each month. 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.

Please join others around Hawai'i who are contributing resources to this worthy cause. In December 2021, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Student Association (student government) approved up to \$32,200 for the purchase of supplies in support of their UH Hilo Menstrual Equity project that would provide feminine hygiene products for UH Hilo students in need.

Yesterday, the Hawai'i County Committee on the Status of Women approved \$2,400 for the purchase of feminine hygiene products to help some of the local high schools be able to start providing these products to young women at their schools.

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 for this opportunity to provide testimony,

Farrah-Marie Gomes, Ph.D.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 7:12:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Hung Tram	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of this bill.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 7:27:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ashley Katamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear honorable members of the committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of SB2821 SD1. My name is Ashley Katamoto and I am a middle and high school teacher at a public charter school in the Honolulu district. As someone who is both a woman and who works with young women, I am in full support of providing them with the menstrual products needed in schools. Menstruation is a difficult thing that all women go through monthly and the cost of these products can be difficult for struggling families. These products should be easily accessible and free to all students so their menstrual cycle does not create a barrier to their education.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today,

Ashley Katamoto

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 7:50:58 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Johnny Kim	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

While this bill doesn't fix the issue of poverty, it is one crucial step in tackling it.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 7:55:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Students whose families are in poverty face many barriers to come to school, and that was true even before the COVID-19 pandemic. As a high school vice principal, I have firsthand experienced students asking me in hushed tones if I have any menstruation products or coming to me in a panic if there is blood on their pants. Having a period is natural and this bill makes access to the needed products just as natural so that students can remove this barrier to learning. I fully support SB2821.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 7:56:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Cruz and committee members,

I am in support of this bill that will provide menstrual equality by providing free menstrual products at our schools. Can you imagine being a 12 year old or 15 year old who suddenly gets their period in class? That alone can be overwhelming. Now add to that the fact that they may not have or may not want to purchase menstrual products. Would you be able to learn if that was you? Would you be able to focus if your mind was so worried about leaking out of whatever you're using to help stop the flow from seeping through your clothes? I wouldn't be able to. We need to provide these products FREE for all students who may need them. Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Caroline Freudig

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:06:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tammy Holt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Kieth-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

My name is Tammy Holt and I am writing in support of SB 2821.

Many teachers provide out-of-pocket money to provide their students with emergency personal supplies. Teachers do this because it is a basic need for their students. Please help teachers and their students by helping to provide students with personal feminine products.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2821

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:15:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Arwen Revere	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Arwen Revere and I am from Kailua. I go to high school at Le Jardin Academy. I am in strong support of SB2821. This is such an important bill! So many people who menstruate have to skip school because of a lack of access to proper hygiene products. Because of this, these people also lose access to education. I believe that this bill could help alleviate these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Arwen Revere

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:23:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sara O'Rourke	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2821.

My name is Sara O'Rourke and I am a teacher at Kapaa High School on Kauai. Providing menstrual products at school will remove barriers to education for students who do not have access to menstrual products at home.

In addition, sometimes students just don't have menstrual products with them at school. Just recently, I know that one of my students got signed out to go home because she got her period during the school day and did not have any pads or tampons with her. She missed a whole day of learning. If the menstrual products were available at school, she would have been able to stay in school for the day. All of the small incidents like this add up over time and many students have lost out on valuable teaching instruction.

Let's do our part to normalize menstruation, provide equal access, and have menstruation products available at school. Please vote in support of Senate Bill 2821. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:36:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Adriann and I am a resident of Honolulu, born and raised. I am testifying in support of SB2821, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important 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 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.

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
SB2821

DATE: February 18, 2022

TIME: 10:10 AM

PLACE: Conference Room 211

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2821

I am testifying in support of SB2821 because as a woman, I have experienced the complex difficulties that come with handling the menstruation cycle. For many, menstruation cycles are not always consistent and add to the stress of knowing when to be prepared with the proper supplies. I personally have encountered for myself the hassle of trying to obtain a pad or tampon but have not had access due to the area I was in not having any available or not being able to afford any due to financial struggles. Free menstrual products should be accessible to all people because it is a prime example of something that is completely out of a woman's control, as well as anyone who is impacted by those experiencing a menstrual cycle. Schools should be able to provide the necessary products to ensure the well-being of their students, not only for academic excellence but overall health status.

The 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. Passing SB2821 will provide individuals with a menstruation cycle the supplies needed to handle something that is out of our control. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kristine Samonte

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:45:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am testifying in support of SB2821, which was passed out of Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. This is an important because I have experienced times of not having any menstrual products on hand while in school, which resulted in having to use non-menstrual products, like napkins, which were not always the most sanitary. This was a key issue during my adolescence because I grew up in a very low-income household. My mother was a single mother of two girls, and it was always difficult to have menstrual products at home because my mother either did not have enough money, or she was too exhausted from working two jobs, and had forgotten to purchase them.

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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:45:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Todd Ozawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Todd Ozawa and I am a teacher at Wheeler Middle School in Wahiawa Hawaii. As a middle school teacher, I am especially aware of the many challenges our students, particularly girls, face during a most difficult part of their physical and psychological development. I have been a teacher in several middle schools across the island over many years, and my experience with my girl students throughout leaves me no doubt that this is a need that must be met.

All our students are faced with an ever-increasing load of demands and expectations, which are compounded in many instances by inadequate access to necessary menstrual supplies and resources. When these are not available, our goals, including academic achievement and socialization, necessarily become secondary, to the detriment of all. In addition, this lack often has direct health consequences, where students who are disadvantaged attempt to make up for their lack through unsafe or unsanitary practices. It is important to recognize these as essential needs, and not optional or luxury items that students could simply 'do without' or absent them, could just 'find a way' to get by.

Finally, as a simple matter of equity, if we already agree on and provide what is needed for student needs in regards to safety, health, nutrition, etc. for students regardless of their sex, then it is obvious that this is an area where progress should and must be made. Therefore I am testifying in support of SB2821 SD1.

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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:49:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Derek Govin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in support of SB2821 SD1

2/17/2022

Derek Govin

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1 (menstrual equity). The consistency and importance of this funding cannot be understated.

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 in unhygienic alternatives and missing school because they cannot afford to purchase products in school or at home. This bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality and education equity.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1. Mahalo. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support for this bill.

Derek Govin

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 8:53:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Erin Henderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Erin Henderson and I am a school counselor at a high school in Kapa'au. I am testifying in strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because I have witnessed numerous female students in desperate need of period supplies while at school as well as the emotional turmoil that goes along with not having the necessary protection.

As a school counselor, many students come to me when they have a problem. Numerous female students were coming and asking if I had a pad they could have. So much so that I created a Donor's Choose project, The Bare Necessities for Girls, to acquire needed period supplies for our students. The success of this project was immeasurable. After receiving my materials, I created flyers to post in all of the girls' bathrooms, including one in each and every stall, which notified female students that feminine supplies were available at no charge. The response was immediate!

The girls immediately started coming to me to get pads and tampons. Some comments from that first day were... "Oh my gosh Ms., you saved my life today," and "This is so great 'cause I didn't know I was gonna get my period today and I don't have anything with me," and "Thank you so much for doing this for us." The girls also loved that I had pouches for them to take so carrying their supplies was easy and covert. In the days and weeks that followed, the girls continuously streamed into my office needing supplies. Some of the girls would bring in friends who were too shy to come alone, allowing me to meet other students who I haven't had the opportunity to meet yet. Here we are, 4 months later, and the girls continue to come to me on the daily.

The project has helped many girls with normalizing the fact that menstruation is part of their life and nothing to be ashamed of. It has helped create a culture at our school where it is okay to ask for supplies and it is perfectly normal to not feel great when you are on your period. Many girls have come in to talk to me about sensitive topics like menstrual cramps, bloating, proper hygiene and safety, as well as the emotional ups and downs of menstruation.

This bill **MUST** be passed! Our girls deserve (and require) these period products. I truly believe that the passing of this bill, and the resulting free availability of period products at school, will

help boost academic achievement because the girls will be fully able to focus on their learning rather than stressing out about the possibility of having a period related accident at school and the resulting humiliation and social rejection that would surely follow.

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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:02:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kenna Gardes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Kenna and I am a resident of Palolo Valley. I am testifying in strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because I have seen students have to pay for menstrual products in schools and I believe that struggling to pay for a pad or tampon is not a struggle that women should have to go through. It is important for female students to have access to period products in schools and take away any shame or stigma associated with having a period. I believe it will also help keep students in schools as there will be fewer days missed by female students due to bleeding through clothes, embarrassment, etc. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Aloha members of the WAM Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1. I can tell you from personal experience - there is nothing more horrifying than having that natural occurrence for the female population make an appearance when you are not ready or prepared. To know that there are many students who need to skip school because they are worried about their period and don't have access to products is a very inequitable issue needing to be addressed. Even more concerning, is the fact that young girls, regardless of their family's financial situation, will never fully be prepared or know when they will get their period for the first time. And the age range of when that would happen is very wide; young girls can get their first period even in elementary school! There is even stigma attached to getting a period, such as "Oh, you're a woman now" - and can you imagine the impact that kind of statement would have on a 5th grader? The ability to mitigate shame and awareness of a young girl who gets their period is essential to protecting the social-emotional needs of our youth. Therefore, as a school system, we need to put things into place to protect this natural, and regularly occurring, menstruation process that impacts about half of our student body.

All schools should have access to free feminine products that are easily accessible so they can help any student who needs it, and at any time. Please support SB2821 SD1. Thank you for your time,

Janet Kim

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:05:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

First, I would like to thank the Ways and Means Committee for hearing this bill. I write in strong support SB2821 SD1 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 may experience 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 SB 2821 SD1 and take the first steps to end period poverty on campuses statewide.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:05:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Liz Noetzel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my strong support of SB2821.

I am a seventh grade English Teacher at Waikoloa Elementary and Middle School on the Big Island in the Kona district.

To be honest, I had never thought about the issue of a lack of menstrual products keeping a student from attending school, or even realized that it was an 'issue.' I simply had not considered that our young ladies may not have access to personal products, but after learning of this bill, I thought to myself, 'Well, of course! Absolutely!'

I think this is one of those instances of my own privilege creating a scenario where I did not consider that financial situations arise whereby not all families can afford products for their daughters. If a student does not have access to the products necessary to provide a SAFE and secure day, then of course they will stay home and not learn anything. It makes complete sense to keep all girls in school by providing them with free menstrual products. As a teacher, we want all students in class, all the time! Let's do whatever we can to guarantee that we can get them into school!

Thank you for supporting SB2821!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Noetzel

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:21:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
SHIRLEY YAMAUCHI	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I agree, sadly, with what Senator Kouchi had to say below:

"[SB2821 SD1](#), a bill to provide menstrual equality by providing free menstrual products at schools, will also be reviewed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee Friday. Oftentimes, students who do not have access to proper menstrual care products miss school unnecessarily. Senate President Ron Kouchi said [in his opening day remarks](#), “what struck me is the quote, ‘if we have to make a decision between buying food for the family or getting the right products for their teenager, then the food will win.’ That should not be a choice that our people have to make. We need to ensure that we’re giving them every tool to allow them to succeed.” When I was growing up on Hawaii island, my mother was reduced to making her own menstrual products at home, as we were on government assistance and food stamps. Food stamps do not allow families to buy maxi pads or tampons. In order to feed our family of three, I recall my mother using old clothing fabric and Saran Wrap to create washable maxi pads. By the time I was of menstruating age, my family was better off financially and we were able to afford Always and other similar paper products. My parents did sacrifice in other ways, financially, in order to afford these items for me. I am an only child and had no other siblings. Please consider passing SB2821 SD1, to help the female students of Hawaii. No family should be reduced to making their own menstrual paper products, due to financial difficulty. Thank you.

Feb 17, 2022

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Michele Baldovi and I have been a school counselor in Hawaii's public schools for 29 years. I am testifying in strong support of bill SB2821 which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation to make menstrual products for students free on all Hawai'i public and charter school campuses.

- I was a middle school counselor for 27 years before being given the opportunity to work at the elementary school level. 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 SB2821 to ensure equity and dignity to menstruating students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo nui loa!

Michele Baldovi, M.Ed, NBCT
School Counselor

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:25:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Shane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support providing equality for feminine sexual education and hygiene

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:28:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stacey Moniz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a lifelong feminist and advocate for women of all ages, I strongly support this legislation. I encourage all of you to please take a look at the cost of period products. Especially for men who may not realize that women need to purchase these products EVERY SINGLE MONTH. This isn't a choice, women bleed each month and are unfairly burdened with this cost. This bill would help young people who bleed while they are in school and I STRONGLY support this!

I would be so excited for Hawai`i to be a cutting edge State by enacting this amazing legislation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Peace and love,
Stacey

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:30:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Anna Mackey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Anna and I am a resident of Laupahoehoe Hawaii and an employee of Laupahehoe Community Public Charter School. I am testifying in strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because I have witnessed young girls struggling with access to necessary hygiene products available at school when they need them. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:41:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Beth	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this bill. As a public school teacher for 17 years, and as a person who menstruates, I can say that having free products available at school could prevent missed classes, embarrassment and shame for thousands of menstruators. Please treat menstruation as the natural biological process as it is and not as a "luxury" for menstruators.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:46:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tami Whitney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Ways & Means committee,

I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation.

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.

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

Tami Whitney

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:47:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Laura Ramirez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support SB2821 SD1 as it is an obvious and easy solution to meet the needs of students so that they are healthy and cared for and can focus on learning and participating in school. We all know of the families that can't afford toiletries once they pay the high cost of food and rent. Many girls are left to their own devices to come up with some form of menstrual protection which leaves them uncomfortable and embarrassed, ashamed of their odor or worried they might visibly leak blood. Girls are often traded and bullied because of their period. This is no way to feel every month for a week at a time. Menstrual products should be made readily available to students so that they are not distracted and discouraged from school.

My mother, 3 sisters and I all ask you to please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Laura Ramirez and the Bettencourt family

Kapa'a, Kaua'i

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:49:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kyra Jones	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz

Vice Chair Keith-Agaran

Members of the Committee

Thursday, February 17, 2022

My name is Kyra Jones and I am in strong support of SB 2821. The Coronavirus pandemic has dealt such a hard blow to so many families in our State, especially financially. However, menstruation as a natural function of the female human body, should NOT put school-aged students at even more of a disadvantage, as a result.

On top of basic necessities, there are many families in our State, who cannot afford the cost of stocking feminine hygiene products in their homes. Young women, girls, transgender and nonbinary individuals who do not have feminine hygiene products at home, should not be put in the same position, at least not while they're at school.

1. should also never feel ashamed to voice their need for access to sanitary products and safe and hygienic spaces, with clean running water, to use them in at school. The very natural process of menstruation, especially at its onset, should come with an honored inalienable right for a student to manage it properly.

Each student's right to make the most of an equal opportunity education should not be negatively impacted by their period. "Period poverty" has also affected school attendance as reported by the Legislature. Clearly, this issue is far-reaching and affects students at a deeper level than most people realize. Imagine how much more a student could benefit from their education system if they did not have sanitary products at home but had them at school. Instead of being worried about speaking up when they get their period, they would know who to ask for what they need, and know how to take care of it; then go about being focused on the next right thing they should and could be doing in school.

Rather than buying in to and perpetuating the stigma associated with having a period, these students would thrive without fear. They would have more of a reason to believe in their own abilities to learn and move forward with purpose in the world as the future of our community.

Unburdened by a lack of menstruation support, there is no telling how far they would go, if they were truly supported in reaching their full potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Sincerely,

Kyra K Jones

University of Hawaii at Manoa- Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:52:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kecia McDonald	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a certified K-12 Health educator in the HDOE and a mom. I worked at a middle school and as the Health teacher was often approached by students asking for feminine hygiene products. They came to me "on the sly" and I felt more like a bootlegger than a Health teacher or a concerned human being. There should be nothing quiet or shameful about asking for something clearly indicated to be sanitary products. They should be available as much as soap, water, toilet paper, and paper towels are. I still remember asking my friends to "check" my backside in the hallways when I was at school and the mortification of running out of products and being on guard the entire day. It was disruptive to learning and a major distraction. Please make sure all our students have access to this essential material in order to support learning and personal hygiene. By making them readily available we can eliminate stress and shame, and build concentration and confidence.

Thank you,

Kecia McDonald

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:53:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Rosemarie Muller	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

My name is Rosemarie Muller and I live in Keaau, Hawaii. SB 2821 (relating to menstrual equality) is a public-health, gender equality and human rights issue. Please pass this very important measure.

Mahalo

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:57:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lara Mangieri	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill to help our young girls who struggle with affording menstrual supplies.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:58:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lisa Tirimacco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am testifying in support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because I have experienced/witnessed/believe *[insert your story or a quick fact about the issue in Hawaii]*.

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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:00:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Adriana Faimealelei	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Adriana and I am a resident of Oahu. I am testifying in strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because I have experience the struggles in my teen years of not being able to afford pads I would have to use the schools papertowels that are in school restroom if there was any. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.”

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:02:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stephanie Po Yi Ho	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:05:18 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Keanuene Gannet	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1. Please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1.

February 17, 2022

Debra Henton
95 No Ka Oi Place
Kapaa, Hawaii 96746

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Ways & Means 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 strong support of **SB2821**, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important 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 Kamakahalei 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 **SB2821** 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

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:07:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Robert Widhalm	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB2821.

It is astounding to listen to the radio or watch a little television and hear about all of the erectile dysfunction treatments available. It seems like our society has come a long way when talking about certain topics; twenty years ago you might not hear such commercials talking so casually about how to support men with their ability to perform sexually. Yet, when there is mention of menstruation and helping to support women and girls with a NORMAL AND NATURAL part of being a female, we tend to shy away from not just using appropriate wording (using such euphemisms as "Aunt Flo" or "Time of the Month") but to accept menstruation and periods as normal and natural and to not stigmatize women who may not be prepared or have the means to obtain the appropriate products for menstruation.

To illustrate my issue, let me share a story of my very first teaching job as a middle school math teacher (over twenty years ago). One day, I kept a young lady after school for disruptive behavior; we will call her Sarah. After she spent her time in detention, I let Sarah know she was free to leave, but Sarah didn't want to get up. I inquired if something was wrong or if she really didn't understand or agree with her punishment. Sarah said she knew she misbehaved but didn't want to leave. Finally after several more minutes, she asked if I could get the social studies teacher (a female). I was really concerned I damaged the relationship with this student and wasn't sure what might be the issue, yet I did get the other teacher who came and talked quietly with Sarah. The other teacher left and returned with a towel, some paper towels, and most likely some other things. She carefully helped Sarah out of the school desk and wrapped a towel around her waist and took out of my classroom, leaving some paper towels on the seat where Sarah was sitting. The other teacher returned to finish cleaning the seat and let me know Sarah was okay. To drive the point home, another female student whom I was tutoring at the same time simply stated, "You didn't know, Mister? I knew what Sarah's problem was."

As a twenty-something male teacher, I wasn't aware enough to recognize the natural development of young women along with the unfortunate stigma that tends to come along with it, and I grew up with a younger sister. So it's not like I wouldn't or shouldn't know about menstruation. As a teacher, I should! So, imagine if schools simply would treat menstruation and periods as the normal, natural process they are AND provided products that helped to de-stigmatize having a period arrive when one is not prepared. I urge the committee to pass this bill

to not just provide necessary products for young ladies going through a menstrual cycle but also to NORMALIZE a normal and NATURAL bodily process, just like erectile dysfunction is seen as normal through the vast amount of commercials.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Robert (Bobby) Widhalm

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:07:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Victoria Pescaia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1 relating to menstrual equality (free menstrual products to students).

My name is Victoria Pescaia. I am a teacher at Waialua High and Intermediate School. Our female students are 11-18.

I have been teaching for 27 years. During this time, I have witnessed many female students suffer from their periods at school. Like many of my female students, I have had the unfortunate experience of Mother Nature arriving unexpectedly. They may not have regular menstruation cycles or it may even be their first menstruation. They are embarrassed when they bleed through their clothes and don't want to walk across campus to the nurse's office to buy sanitary products (if they even have money to buy something).

What do they do? They go home; they avoid seeing their classmates. This leads to loss of instructional time in the classroom. This is not a celebration of womanhood, but suppression of it.

While I have bought supplies for my students with my own money, many still feel uncomfortable asking to for these supplies. Menstruation should be not be an emotional stigma or a financial strain. Having supplies available in the bathrooms, like other sanitary products such as toilet paper and soap, makes sense and is the the equitable thing to do.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Pescaia

Waialua High and Intermediate School Teacher

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:27:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SB 2821, SD 1, 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.

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.

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:44:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Amy Moore	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB2821– RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUALITY.

IN SUPPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

I, Amy Moore am writing in to support the intent of SB 2821, which requires the Department of Education to provide free menstrual products to all students on all public school campuses. As menstrual products may be difficult for some students to afford or access when they are in need, having these materials available to students for free at school campuses could help them stay in class and engage in instructional and other extracurricular activities such as sports or clubs.

There are numerous reasons young women do not have access to menstrual products, and this bill could be a solution to these barriers. Think of those middle school and high school students who come from lower-income homes and miss days of school each month because their families cannot afford menstrual products. It is not simply days of school, these missed days every month turn into weeks of missed school over their years as a student, therefore putting them at even more disadvantage from their male classmates and other girls whose families can afford these products. This bill will help address the inequity these students have had to face due to the unavoidable yet preventable issue of period poverty.

Besides the period poverty aspect, this bill would address the barrier of lack of access to menstrual products. In my days as a student, I can recall numerous times when I have unexpectedly gotten my period during class and needed to sit in the nurse’s office and call my parents simply because I did not have access to a tampon or pad. My parents did not live nearby, and often did not even answer the phone as they were busy during the day. No one in the school office, staff or teachers ever offered me menstrual products, and I could not, in the middle of class, ask others discreetly for a tampon without teachers thinking I was talking or disrupting their class. I did think, of those machines where students can pay 25 cents for menstrual products, but from my experience, there are issues with those as well. For example, the products did not come in varying sizes as they seemed to be for adult women with extremely heavy flows,

LATE

as in they were huge and did not fit middle school girls, not even high school girls in my opinion. Also, if my fellow classmates did not have tampons, they most certainly did not have extra quarters because rarely do students carry spare change to class. And on top of that my school's machine was broken. Therefore, the most helpful solution would have been free access to menstrual products.

When I heard of SB282, I knew I wanted to share my support coming from my own experiences as a previous Hawai'i student and as a woman. I am glad these discussions are made without fear of shame and embarrassment, so we can continue to advocate for a wahine and our keiki.

Mahalo Nui loa,

Amy Moore



SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 11:09:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sarah Tochiki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Esteemed Senators,

My name is Sarah Tochiki and I am a teacher at Chiefess Kamakahahei Middle School. I am testifying in support of SB2821 because it is important that there are no barriers for our students to be able to access their education. While something like menstrual products may seem insignificant to those who can afford them, for those who struggle financially, this is a major obstacle to coming to school. We must make sure we support the needs of our students. This will help them to make sure they are ready to concentrate on learning. We cannot teach students if they are stressed about non-school related things. I am happy to see this bill advance. This is so important for our students. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sarah Tochiki

sarah.tochiki@gmail.com

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 11:33:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Cyd Hoffeld, a resident of Hilo, and strong supporter of **SB2821**. As a Kanaka Maoli woman who was a single parent of two beautiful daughters for many years, I understand the financial struggles of having to shelter, clothe, feed, transport, and provide necessities like menstrual products not only for myself but for my daughters too. I also remember as an adolescent girl leaving campus when I started my period and having to wrap my jacket or sweater around my waist until my grandma came to get me. It was so embarrassing.

This bill would not only help struggling parents, it would increase the attendance of menstruating students in classes by providing free period products during school hours while minimizing the embarrassment of not having any menstrual supplies when on campus.

Knowing that period products would be freely available and identified as part of a schools line item purchase would signify that the Department of Education views a person's menstrual cycle as normal and natural which would reduce much of the stigma youth often feel. This is why I **strongly support SB2821** and I hope you do too.

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

February 17, 2022

Senate's Committees on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

Hearing: Friday, February 18, 2022 - 10:10 AM

Testimony on Bill SB No. 2821 SD1 - Relating to Menstrual Equality

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

My name is Clariann Smither Clark and I am currently a graduate student at the University of Hawaii Manoa. I am writing in full support of SB No. 2821 SD1 that requires the Department of Education and the State Public Charter School Commission to promote educational and gender equity by providing all necessary sanitary and hygiene products free of charge to all students on public school campuses. Making appropriations.

Worrying about a leak, hoping for secrecy while looking for emergency supplies, and fighting against antiquated tampon dispensers that swallow change are vexing school memories students can face. However, the issue extends beyond shame to gender disparities that persist in basic hygiene. School facilities supply toilet paper, but most do not supply menstrual products leaving students who receive their period during the school day on their own seeking from classmates, teachers, or administrators if they do not have.

Menstrual health is a major public health issue. Females can be affected by period poverty in a variety of ways. It can make the individual feel ashamed of or embarrassed about their menstrual cycle. In addition to the physical and emotional consequences, it may force students to miss school due to not being able to afford menstrual pads or tampons. Menstruators resort to using toilet paper, going home, or using menstrual products longer than intended which can cause urogenital infections such as urinary tract infections and bacterial vaginosis.

Lastly, providing necessary sanitary and hygiene products for students is economical. A single box of pads or tampons can range from \$7 to \$10 in the United States. The expenses of obtaining supplies monthly can be prohibitive for low-income households. Free supplies would assist to alleviate economic strain that a period provides. Menstrual products should be considered in the same way that refilling toilet paper is treated. It is a medical requirement, so it should not be hampered by cost discussions, but seen as something that needs to be addressed.

Thank you very much for your time.

Respectfully,

Clariann Smither Clark
University of Hawaii Manoa

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 12:45:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Esperanza Paredes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB 2821– RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

To: Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Chair Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

From: Esperanza Paredes

I am in strong support of SB 2821 Relating to Menstrual Equity. My name is Esperanza Paredes. I am a student, intern, part-time worker, and concerned resident of Hawai‘i. As an individual who attended public school and has a menstrual cycle, I feel it is my duty to speak up for the next generation of students and individuals with periods. Schools must provide free menstrual products to all of their students to make school a safer place, reduce period stigma, lower period-related absenteeism, and help tear down the barrier of access to menstrual products.

A study by Thinx and PERIOD called State of the Period 2021, provides data that shows that 23% of students in public schools struggled to access menstrual products. 16% of students have been forced to choose between buying period products or food and clothes as a result of the pandemic. 51% have been forced to wear their menstrual product for longer than recommended and 21% of students think being back at school will make it easier to access period products (Thinx and PERIOD, pp. 2, <https://period.org/uploads/State-of-the-Period-2021.pdf>). By providing students with menstrual products free of charge at school, we can take action to lower all of these statistics and make a difference in their lives.

I had a very close friend in high school who was part of a very low-income family and could not receive government assistance due to their immigration status. When they would get their period, she would go to different female teachers, the school nurse, and to our friend group to collect tampons and pads to get her, her sister, and their mother through the month. I distinctly remember her and her sister missing school at least once because they ran out of products and stayed home to use old cloth as a menstrual product substitute.

The data shows that a concerning percentage of students will rely on receiving period products upon returning to their public-school campus. DOE needs to do their part in creating a safe environment for their students, and actively seek to remove barriers for them. This is why I

strongly support SB 2821, and highly recommend that public schools provide free menstrual products to students on public school campuses. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and for taking the time to read my testimony.

Esperanza Paredes

Honorable Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Hawaii State Legislature



Marleen Rose Castro
Graduate Student in Social Work
University of Hawaii Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822

February 16, 2022

Testimony on SB2821 relative to requiring the Department of Education to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all public charter school campuses. Makes appropriations. (SD1)

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

My name is Marleen Rose Castro. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii Manoa majoring in Social Work. I am writing in strong support of SB2821 SD1 that requires the Department of Education to distribute free menstruation products to all students on all public school campuses. Requires the State Public Charter School Commission to offer all students on all public charter school campuses with free menstruation products.

Upon conducting some research regarding SB2821 SD1, I realized that period poverty is a persistent problem that must be addressed. Human rights are rights that every human being possesses as a result of his or her dignity as a human being. Menstruation is intrinsically linked to human dignity; when people lack access to safe bathing facilities as well as safe and effective methods of managing their menstrual hygiene, they are unable to manage their menstrual cycles with dignity. Teasing, marginalization, and shame associated to menstruation also undermine the notion of human dignity. This is exacerbated by the fact that menstruation is stigmatized in our society.

Menstruation is an unavoidable part of life. With this in mind, menstrual hygiene items should be considered as essentials rather than luxuries. Unfortunately, food stamps and WIC (women, infants, and children) program subsidies for groceries do not cover menstruation products. Sixty-four percent of women said they've had trouble affording menstrual items like pads, tampons, or reusable goods like menstrual cups in the past. And twenty-one percent said they couldn't afford these goods every month and were at high risk of not having access to adequate menstrual hygiene products. Many females use toilet paper or paper towels instead of pads or tampons because they cannot afford menstrual products. If they try to extend the life of products by using them for many hours at a time, they may experience vulvar irritation and vaginal discomfort. They may also be more susceptible to toxic shock syndrome, a potentially fatal infection.

I humbly ask that you consider SB2821 SD1 and pass this into public law. Our island community is in dire need of these services to break the cycle of period poverty. It's about

ensuring that people have the resources, support, and alternatives they need to manage their menstrual health. It's also about putting an end to the period stigma that has kept not only decision-makers, but also healthcare practitioners, educators, and individuals from prioritizing menstrual health and is why it is essential to pass SB2821 SD1.

I urge all members of the Hawaii State Legislature to support SB2821 SD1.

Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

Marleen Rose Castro
University of Hawaii Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 1:26:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jamie Lai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. Students should be provided with menstrual products, especially as they can become very expensive. If soap, toilet paper and paper towels are provided, so should menstrual products.

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 2:40:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ashley Galacgac	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Ashley Galacgac and resident of Pālolo, O‘ahu. I strongly support SB2821, which I am so happy passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1M appropriation. This is one step closer to justice and equity for all learners.

I worked at two public high schools on the westside of O‘ahu. Both schools focused on college access and post-high school planning amongst students. Students from low-income, (im)migrant, and historically oppressed communities often experienced financial, psychological, and social barriers that made it difficult to receive a quality education. SB 2821 addresses menstrual equity as a gender equality issue. The lack of access to period products is a clear form of gender-based exclusion and oppression.

Period products are vital for the physical and mental health, well-being, and full participation of menstruators, including but not limited to girls, women, transgender, and nonbinary individuals. Failure to consider period needs is a form of sex-based discrimination that disproportionately affects menstruators. I have witnessed teachers and peers of classmates do their best to share their period products. Even with their collective care, this is a systemic issue. Mahalo to the collective awareness that has come from various organizations, especially the Ma‘i Movement here in Hawai‘i.

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 6:27:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kauanoë Helm	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Kauanoë Helm

I am testifying in support of SB2821, which was passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a \$1 million appropriation. It is important because recent studies have shown that about a quarter of menstrating students struggle with access to period products. It is also my experience as a female and former teacher, that many teens still feel a stigma around menstruation and are negatively affected by the lack of access to products.

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.

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 9:42:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Trinity Soares	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee:

I thank you for giving me, Trinity Soares, a high-school student, the opportunity to give my testimony in support of Senate Bill 2821. This bill addresses menstrual equality by providing menstrual products at school.

This issue is extremely large, so I am thankful for the attention and energy you are putting in to address this.

To begin, SB 2821 would provide free menstrual products to anyone who needs them inside schools. This newfound supply of menstrual products would make it so that students who experience their periods would not need to worry about not having these hygienic products at home.

I haven't personally experienced a shortage of menstrual products since I was always prepared and always had whatever I needed on hand. However, I know some people are not as lucky. Due to poverty and/or inflation, many people who need menstrual products cannot get them.

If this bill gets passed, it will allow for students who have a limited budget to get menstrual products at school with no cost to them. This would greatly impact schools in a positive way as we know Hawaii has a high cost of living which takes away from the money used for important things such as menstrual products.

In conclusion, SB 2821 would pose great significance to students experiencing a period but that cannot get menstrual products for any reason.

With each of these points in mind, I, Trinity Soares, request that you please vote in support of Senate Bill 2821.

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 10:11:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Katherine Weldon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a parent and former social worker.

I fully and **STRONGLY** support SB2821.

I fully support the appropriation of necessary \$ to implement this bill.

This bill will help ensure student equity by providing free menstrual products which ARE a basic human need. When students don't have access to period products their health and education suffer. We need to support students by funding this bill. Mahalo.

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 11:35:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members,

Strong support for this measure,

It's hard for many of us to imagine the idea of "period poverty" but sadly it exists here in Hawai'i. It's hard to imagine that there are families so economically insecure that buying menstrual products for their daughters is a hardship, but it is fact. It's hard to image that this period poverty leads to unsanitary practices like reuse of menstrual products or resorting to old rags or toilet paper. But it happens. This bill offers a simple solution to a problem that could result in illness or at the very least loss of school days for our girl students.

Please pass this important bill out of committee, Mahalo nui loa,

Ann S. Freed

Life-time feminist

Mililani, HI

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2022 7:54:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tracy Ann K Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 18, 2022

Aloha "Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee,"

I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1.

My name is Tracy Ann K Davis and I am a 4th grade teacher at Kaunakakai Elementary School on the island of Molokai. I am writing in favor of supporting Senate Bill SB2821 SD1. As a wahine and a mother of two girls, I understand entirely how they feel when they are experiencing their menstrual cycle. Many of our families cannot afford nor are prepared when to expect menstration. With providing these resources we are able to keep our keiki in school and show that we understand what our you ladies are going through. Please help support our keiki during this transision in their lives. Isn't our keiki worth it?

I appreciate all the hard work you have put in, to support the future leaders of Hawaii. I humbly ask that you please vote in support of Senate Bill SB2821 SD1.

Mahalo again for all you do for our Keiki of Hawaii. We apprecate your support in this matter.

Mahalo Nui Loa,
Kumu Tracy Ann K Davis

4th grade teacher

LATE

SB-2821-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2022 9:07:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kawehi Bringas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kawehi Bringas. I'm a senior at Kalaheo High school and the president of our school's student council. I believe that the Hawai'i state legislature should support SB2821 SD1, which supports public health by providing hygiene products to all public schools. This bill will help to address the concerns of hygiene at school facilities and the attendance of students, especially during the pandemic.

Hygiene has become a crucial part of our lives, with a mask covering half our face and hand sanitizer always in our reach. The Ma'i Movement Hawai'i stated, "nearly 50% of Hawai'i DOE students were economically disadvantaged" before the virus outbreak, which makes buying basic living necessities difficult. For females, feminine products are essential when we experience our menstrual cycle. Being a female student, there is a lack of support in that aspect of our health. For example, my English teacher had a dilemma with an elementary student that got their first period during school. Yet, the school did not have any menstrual products in the bathroom, not the health room. The young girl had to wait nearly an hour until someone came with pads and a change of shorts. The resources offered from SB2821 SD1 could prevent more situations like that from occurring in our schools.

Student attendance is important for not only the schools but for the students. In November of 2021, KITV 4 News stated that in a study with 360 women, "half of the participants reported missing school or work either because of menstruation or not having supplies". Not only is the absence of available feminine products affecting women's health, but women's education. Menstrual cycles are natural and at times, unexpected. It would be a great movement of support if educational facilities offered basic hygiene items for women. Also, it will motivate their students to focus on their education, rather than stressing over whether they have or can afford menstrual products. To supply much needed resources creates a positive and comfortable learning environment for students affected by menstrual struggles.

SB2821 SD1 will be a great benefit to the health and education of Hawai'i students. I hope that the Ways and Means Committee will consider passing this bill. Mahalo for your time and opportunity to testify.