



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Friday, February 10, 2023, at 2:30 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

HB 481 – RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill (HB) 481 relating to menstrual equity. We support the intent of this bill and offer the following comments.

HB 481 would require the University of Hawai'i (UH) to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any UH campus. This requirement aligns with our current UH System Student Basic Needs Master Plan where UH has adopted The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (The Hope Center) definition of students' basic needs that includes access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing - to sleep, study, cook, and shower; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene care; and childcare and related needs.

In 2020, The Hope Center and the UH System Basic Needs Committee administered the RealCollege Survey to all students in the UH System. The study found that of those who responded, 39% were food insecure within the prior 30 days, 44% were housing insecure within the last year, and 14% experienced homelessness within the last year. While a specific question was not asked about access to menstrual products, the female students who reported experiencing the above basic needs challenges are at highest risk of also experiencing period poverty. UH recognizes that having menstrual products available to students for free on campus could potentially help relieve some financial stress and allow students to remain focused on their academic goals instead.

All ten campuses of the University have some level of programming that already provides a limited supply of menstrual products to our student population. Our vision to expand this program to the degree contemplated in the bill would require an appropriation, and we would suggest \$1,000,000.00.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 481, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

DATE: Friday, February 10, 2023 **TIME:** 2:30 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Perruso and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to require the University of Hawai'i to provide free menstrual products to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges.

Section 6 of article X of the Hawai'i State Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "[t]his section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." If the Committee decides to pass this bill, we recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:59:18 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

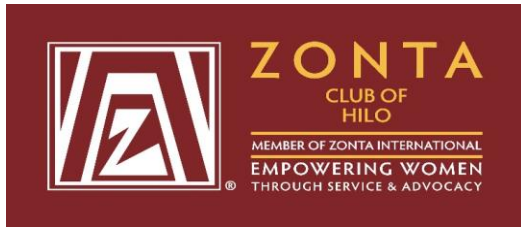
Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i; Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports HB 481.

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



Representative Peruso, Chair, Representative Kapela, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members

From: Zonta Club of Hilo, Charlene Iboshi, Advocacy Committee

RE: Testimony In Support Of HB 481, Relating To Menstrual Equity

The Zonta Club of Hilo has worked with the Ma`i Movement on Hawai`I Island to assemble and distribute “period products” to schools and organizations prior to the enactment of the 2022 law under SB 2821, SD 2, HD1. The new law provided Department of Education the funding for “menstrual products” in public schools through high school. Many students in public schools, including the University of Hawai`i and Community College Campuses, are in the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Working) and poverty categories and could benefit from similar “menstrual equity” law. Unfortunately, the pandemic has driven many of ALICE group members into poverty. Report finds sharp spike in percentage of Hawaii residents living in poverty (Dec., 2022)

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2022/12/07/report-finds-sharp-spike-percentage-hawaii-residents-living-poverty/>

This enlightened Legislature understood “menstrual equity” and passed the menstrual equity law in the 2022 Session for DOE funding. The local schools on Hawai`i Island have seen the positive impacts already. “Academic adviser calls menstrual products law a success.”

<https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2023/02/09/hawaii-news/academic-adviser-calls-menstrual-products-law-a-success/>

The Zonta Club of Hilo is part of a statewide, national and international organization that empowering women and girls to have equal footing as males through advocacy and service. HB 481 would provide “period products” on the University of Hawaii and Community College campuses. We can expect the same positive impact on college students, who will be our future leaders. Have them concentrate on learning, understanding positive policy and community service to elevate our community now for the future.

We ask that you pass HB 481, Menstrual Equity Bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:23:53 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Tulang	Zonta Club of Hilo, Kauai, Leilehua & Hanalei	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support the period product bill for girls in all schools.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:00:36 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lacey Gero	Alliance for Period Supplies	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are in full support of this legislation which would allow for university students to access period supplies. This access is crucial to ensuring that students are able to thrive.



To: House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Hearing Date/Time: February 10, 2023 at 2:30PM
Place: Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 309
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB481

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

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB481 Relating to Menstrual Equity which would ensure that menstrual products are available for free across all University of Hawai'i system campuses. This is an important matter not only for health but also for equal access to education.

All students under the University system deserve to access the benefit of free menstrual products. For students with period cycles, time spent running home or to the store to access sanitation products can go towards studying, attending class and being present in school. Further, 58% of UH students reporting in a 2021 survey that they experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity (2021 Basic Needs Insecurity Report). Providing menstrual products at each school across the system will ensure students struggling financially are not penalized academically for having periods.

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 O'ahu. UH Hilo, UH Mānoa, 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.

with Aloha,
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net



The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Honorable Chair Amy Perruso
Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela
Committee Members

Friday, February 10, 2023, 2:30 pm

RE: Support for HB481 - Requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges.

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

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i **strongly supports HB481**, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. We request an amendment to include education centers and appropriate funds.

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a locally grown organization committed to addressing menstrual inequity and ending period poverty, or the limited or inadequate access to menstrual products or menstrual health education, due to factors including but not limited to financial constraints, negative socio-cultural stigmas associated with menstruation, or inadequate access to clean facilities and running water to maintain proper hygiene. We recognize 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 believe that every person has the right to a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, gender equality, and mental and emotional well-being. The inability to access menstrual products due to lack of income, education, stigma, or shame has detrimental effects on all these aspects, thus negatively impacting students' ability to reach their full potential. We have seen it through our [work and pilot](#) with the State of Hawai'i Department of Education and are aware of multiple anecdotal reports that the same is happening in our universities and community colleges.

In the last two years, we have donated nearly 33,000 menstrual products to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, University of Hawai'i–West O'ahu, Hawai'i Community College, University of Hawai'i Maui College, Leeward Community College, and Windward Community College. Free menstrual products are also available at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Honolulu Community College, Kapi'olani Community College, and Kaua'i Community College by way of community donations, student fees via student government, student clubs, and organizations, such as the Honor Society, or university personnel purchasing menstrual products out-of-pocket. Despite our combined efforts, however, it is not enough to provide equitable access to all menstruators.

As a matter of fact, many of the campuses that we partnered with were already providing free menstrual products for years, but their efforts were fragmented, unconsolidated, and inequitable because of a lack of resources and support from the administration. There has never been a consolidated system-wide effort to address menstrual inequity and period poverty in spite of all the campuses undertaking their own initiatives to provide free menstrual products. HB481 is an initiative that takes steps to do just that, requiring low investment. The average cost of one menstrual product is \$0.15, and we estimate \$2-\$5 annually per biologically female student based on data from the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Kapi'olani Community College - the only schools with campus-wide access. In our statewide pilot in the Department of Education public and charter schools, the estimated annual cost to provide menstrual products was, on average, \$5 per menstruator, so the estimate is in line with our pilot.

Nationally, new research published by George Mason University's College of Public Health in 2021 found that one in ten college students in the United States is affected by period poverty every month, and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year¹. Compared to menstruators who did not report period poverty, menstruators who experienced period poverty every month were 2.3 times more likely to report depressive symptoms, and those who experienced period poverty in the past year were 1.8 times more likely to report depressive symptoms. The unique set of burdens faced by undergraduate and graduate students experiencing period poverty is compounded by a lack of access to basic resources, such as housing, food, transportation, and access to health care services, including mental health services.

We are particularly concerned with a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i Mānoa that found 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Although this report only highlights issues from a small group of respondents on one campus, it is indicative of the ongoing [issues](#) Hawai'i college students and young adults deal with and continues to face due to inflation and rising house, gas, and food prices. Furthermore, we know from our work that those struggling to meet basic needs will likely be the same individuals impacted by period poverty. The [2021 report conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) revealed the extent of the issue in the state. The exceptionally high cost of living and wage gap for women specifically exacerbate period poverty in Hawai'i. 90% of respondents believe menstrual products are expensive, and nearly 30% of respondents reported that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining them, of which cost was the most cited reason.

The state report also showed the impact of menstruation on full participation in work and school for women and marginalized genders. Half of the respondents have missed school or work because of their period, and specific to education, 42% reported they have had to miss class or leave school because of inadequate access. The report establishes a clear correlation between inadequate access to menstrual products and education, and every individual has the right to an education. All University of Hawai'i campuses have a policy with the same underlying goal and commitment to equal opportunity, affirmative action, and nondiscrimination on the basis of age, race, sex, color, national origin, or disability in its programs and activities. Moreover, there is a nexus between menstruation with educational opportunities and Title IX². Although Title IX does not explicitly reference menstruation, Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally-funded schools and programs, which has the ultimate goal

¹ Cardoso, L.F., Scolese, A.M., Hamidaddin, A. et al. Period poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States. *BMC Women's Health* 21, 14 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5>

² Johnson, M. E., Waldman, E. G., & Crawford, B. J. (2020). Title IX & Menstruation. *Harv. JL & Gender*, 43, 225.

of ensuring equal access to education. With biological females representing nearly 60% of the total student population, or 28,847 students, it is critical that the University of Hawai‘i take action to address the basic needs of the majority of its students, especially when it impacts their ability to access all educational opportunities and activities fully.

Since menstruators do not have the option to cease their period or flow, menstrual products are an essential basic need. We regulate and ensure toilet paper and paper towels are available in restrooms to meet basic needs for health and sanitation, and menstrual products are no different. It is well-established in research and our own statewide data that when menstruators have limited access to resources during menstruation, they seek other coping methods. This includes but is not limited to using unsafe and potentially harmful alternatives, like leaves, paper towels, and socks, using menstrual products beyond the recommended time, or going with none at all. As a result, menstruators face potential medical issues, including preventable infections that make them susceptible to cervical cancer, infertility, and toxic shock syndrome, which are serious and can result in death. It’s a public health concern and unhygienic not to have access to menstrual products, no less so than lack of access to toilet paper.

Menstrual products are vital for the physical and mental health, well-being, and full participation of menstruators. Unfortunately, they are becoming economically out of reach for a growing number of menstruating girls, women, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals in our State. Failure to consider menstrual needs is a form of sex-based discrimination that disproportionately affects menstruators, and there is growing support nationally and globally for expanded access to free menstrual products. Scotland became the first country in the world to pass legislation in 2020 that offers menstrual products free of charge to anyone who needs them. Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY) introduced sweeping legislation to address menstrual needs in the federal bill [H.R. 3614 - Menstrual Equity For all Act of 2021](#). [Illinois](#), [California](#), [Connecticut](#), and [Washington DC](#) have already passed legislation to make menstrual products free and available on their university and college campuses.

We urge you to support **HB481** and welcome you to contact us with any additional questions you may have. Mahalo for your leadership and service to Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,

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



Hawaii Women's Coalition

TO: House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Honorable Chair Amy Perruso
Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela
Committee Members

DATE: Friday, February 10, 2023, 2:30 pm

FROM: Hawai'i Women's Coalition

RE: **Support for HB481** - Requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges.

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and committee members,

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

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition respectfully submits testimony **in strong support of HB481**. The free provision of menstrual products is vital for ensuring the health, dignity, and full participation of menstruators. A [national study](#) commissioned by Free the Tampon found that 86% of people who menstruate have started their periods unexpectedly in public, and 79% have had to improvise a tampon or pad out of toilet paper or something else. The [2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#) also finds that nearly 30% of respondents reported that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining period products, of which high cost was the most cited reason.

By providing menstrual products on all campuses at the University of Hawai'i, 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.

HB481 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 women, transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming people.



Hawaii Women's Coalition

For all of these reasons, the Hawai'i Women's Coalition is pleased to support **HB481**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Hawai'i Women's Coalition

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 3:58:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	AARP, Kokua Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to offer menstrual products to individuals in University of Hawaii bathrooms.

Barbara J. Service MSW (ret)

Child Welfare Supervisor

Kupuna Advocate

Members of the Higher Education and Technology Committee,

I am here today to testify in support of HB 481 that aims to implement free period products on all campuses in the University of Hawai'i System. I serve as the Associated Students for the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) President for UH Mānoa which I advocate for 11,000 full-time students and as the University of Hawai'i Student Caucus Chair (UHSC) where I represent the interests of over 50,000 students within the UH System across our archipelago state. This bill is significant as it addresses a pressing issue faced by many students in Hawai'i, the cost of living which is increasing and the financial pressure they face.

Living in Hawai'i is expensive and (commonly) to the extent where many students even question when they will get their next meal. It's often difficult for students to afford basic necessities, and the cost of period products can be an added burden, especially for those who are experiencing homelessness. Access to free period products can make a significant impact in their lives and provide much-needed relief. Aside from UH Mānoa, this legislation will reach areas such as UH West O'ahu, Kaua'i Community College, and Maui College.

Providing free period products on all campuses in the University of Hawai'i System is a step towards recognizing and addressing the needs of students, and improving their overall well-being. Hearing the stories of my peers experiencing daily challenges, I deeply sympathize as my mother experienced homelessness in her 20's, having to sleep in bathrooms and churches. Sadly, this is still a reality today.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB 481 and implement free period products on all campuses in the University of Hawai'i System. The benefits of this legislation are numerous, creating a more supportive environment for students, and making tomorrow a bit brighter.

Sincerely,



Rudy Ramirez

ASUH President, 110th Senate & UHSC Chair



HB-481

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 12:20:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelina Mercado	Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 3:52:50 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges.

As menstrual equity should be the norm, UH should be setting the precedent and making these products available.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:43:50 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Airabella Molina	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Amy Perruso, Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology,

My name is Airabella Molina and I am a recent graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa with my BA in Public Health with a minor in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. I am a resident of the Kaneohe/Kahaluu district. I am very passionate about Period Poverty in Hawaii as well as addressing Period Poverty at the university and community college levels.

I had the opportunity to intern with Ma'i Movement Hawai'i this past summer for one of my capstone classes and I enjoyed it so much that I continue to volunteer with them today; mainly being a point person responsible for coordinating products with the university/cc efforts. I also just completed a policy analysis paper on implementing period products for free at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important to me because I have witnessed Period Poverty first hand. Peers and myself have struggled with the inability to access menstrual products due to lack of income, education, cultural or societal shame or sanitary places to maintain hygiene. Period Poverty is a huge issue in Hawai'i and is a pressing public health concern. Menstruating college students (may identify with any gender) who are struggling with period poverty often don't know where/when they can access free menstrual products, so having places at school that spread awareness about period poverty and that provide free products, would be very helpful. This is what made me passionate to end Period Poverty in Hawai'i along with Ma'i Movement.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New research led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity report for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:34:11 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members. I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on my University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that Education Centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual equity, and end period poverty. Personally, I have had situations where I forget to bring menstrual products to school. Or, I took the wrong school bag that didn't have my products. Most of the time my "accidents" happen when I think I am done with my monthly period. This then leaves me stuck in the bathroom stressed, insecure, and feeling a sense of shame. In those moments all I can do is stuff my underwear with toilet paper, and hope that I brought a jacket to tie around my waist. Also it is important to note that not everyone has a regular period schedule, some are sporadic. We already have to spend a ridiculous amount of money for our education, the least they could do is have free period products in the bathroom. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Amelia Miller

Student at UH Manoa

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 6:39:37 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Thank you.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:47:24 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Leslie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:08:16 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
stephanie iona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have seen first hand the value the period products are needed by our students at Chiefess and Waimea High school on Kauai. Being able to offer the products as well at food distribution outlets, was also so appreciated by our community. Your support in expanding this offering at our University of Hawaii and all its community college partners is needed.

thank you and Aloha.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:27:07 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karla Silva-Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the efforts to end period poverty here in Hawai'i. As a former university employee working in mental health, I have seen first hand the negative impacts of not having basic necessities. Our students deserve to be able to access their education without worrying about their menstruation.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:38:14 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ayden Mathieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it is a necessity for many people. I currently attend Kapiolani Community College and I am also a part of the Honor Society. We have had a successful program of providing menstrual products at our campus for a few years. It would benefit the school and students greatly if they were given out at no cost. For other schools that don't have free menstrual products, many students suffer because they might not have easy access to those products.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:47:52 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Menstrual products are necessary every month for approximately half of Hawai‘i’s population, beginning in the school-aged years between the ages of 10–15. “Period poverty” refers to an inability to access menstrual products, which may negatively impact an individual’s health and well-being.

Period poverty is often the result of circumstances, including but not limited to income constraints, inadequate menstrual health and hygiene education, cultural or societal shame or stigma surrounding menstruation, and a lack of running water or sanitary locations to maintain personal hygiene.

Period poverty disproportionately affects menstruating students, members of low-income households, persons experiencing houselessness, individuals who identify as nonbinary or transgender, and individuals with a history of involvement with the justice system. Economic challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, magnifying menstrual inequity in Hawai‘i.

Lack of access to menstrual products in schools, limits full participation in school, contributes to higher rates of school absenteeism and missed activities, and negatively impacts a student’s ability to learn. The 2021 study of the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women reported that 42% of respondents missed class or left school because the respondents did not have access to menstrual products, and nearly 22% of respondents missed school entirely. Of those who missed school entirely, nearly 12% missed 3–5 school days, and 6% missed 6–10 school days in an academic year.

Chronic absenteeism is one of the most powerful predictors of student success or failure. It should be a priority for Hawai‘i public schools, including the state’s higher education system, to minimize or eliminate chronic absenteeism. Students miss school for many reasons, but absenteeism due to inadequate menstruation management is entirely avoidable, if the state is willing to act to prevent it. Please pass HB481.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:14:57 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Waiwaiole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have witnessed the financial burden that comes with purchasing feminine hygiene products. For those that use them, having to decide between food or hygiene should not be something to worry about.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:07:21 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Minhea Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

The university provides toilet paper, soap, paper towels, and toilet seat covers. They don't ask students to pay for their own. I believe that menstrual products should be the same and freely dispensed on all campuses. It is unacceptable for someone to have to go through the trouble of buying basic hygiene products. I think this is not simply a woman's problem, but a humane problem and a process to achieve social justice.

The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity. I'm grateful that I have the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:30:08 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brianna Ninomoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this bill because every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:25:01 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of this bill.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:35:08 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Kwok	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

According to statistics and testimony, some students skip school due to the lack of period supplies. Our natural cycle should not be a reason to have to affect our learning. I have worked with Mai Movement in gathering supply donations. Students really appreciate this and I hope the school can provide these much needed products.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:51:21 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
K Miyahana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB48, requiring the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:51:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Finau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support!

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:05:53 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Murakami	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have experienced not having enough menstrual products of my own and have had embarrassing moments where they leaked through my pants. If I had access to menstrual products on campus, I would not have to worry about leaking as much. Leaking accidents are embarrassing. Others tend to shame and make fun of you as well.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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.

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have experienced I couldn't bring or forgot menstrual products so, I have to skip the class because I have to go home.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:18:00 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Jaworowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am very happy to strongly support this bill. It is a matter of human dignity. I am not testifying on behalf of Kapi'olani community college, but I do work there and I do see the need for my female students to have period products readily available. There are no machines in which you can buy the products on an as needed basis. There are simply no resources. In the past, one of the counselors and I used to go to Costco and buy tampons in bulk for the restroom in our building. Periods can come on suddenly, or can be unusually heavy, and students don't always have the right products with them when they need it. We don't ask students to bring toilet paper to the campus, and so I also think that this is a product that we should supply for them free of charge.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 5:37:03 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom a Kanaka Maoli.

I'm writing in SUPPORT of HB481.

me ke aloha 'āina,
Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:39:16 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 9, 2023

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

In 2021, Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women published a study to better understand the ways that period poverty affects the menstruators of our state. The study found that 42% of respondents had missed school or left class early due to their periods, especially because of barriers including cost, knowledge, accessibility, and stigma. Additionally, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity Report for the University of Hawai'i (UH) found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty. Establishing wider access to free menstrual products on UH campuses and education centers would help to reduce barriers that students face in meeting their basic needs. This bill increases the inclusivity of our university facilities, and promotes greater menstrual equity throughout the UH system.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. Menstruation is a bodily function that is just as important as any other bodily function. It is a biological process, and people who menstruate cannot simply

“opt out” of having their periods. Thus, menstrual products are a basic necessity like toilet paper, hand soap, and other personal hygiene products, but are economically out of reach for a growing number of menstruating girls, women, and gender-diverse people. The UH campuses currently provide soap, toilet paper, and paper towels in their bathrooms (and continue to stock them when vandalism or theft occurs) because those are basic necessities that people need to address their bodily functions. The UH system doesn’t expect non-menstruators to provide their own rolls of toilet paper in each of its buildings, yet it currently does expect menstruators to provide their own menstrual products. This is unfair and has been the status quo for far too long. The University of Hawai‘i can do better, and the students of UH deserve better.

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

Mahalo nui loa,

Sarah Kern

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:52:48 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rouel Velasco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Amy Perrusso, Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela and the members of the Committee on Higher Education and Technology,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that adds education centers in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on University campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have believe that by providing menstrual products free of charge would allow students to study and learn without disruption or the lack of accessing period products. The demographics of college students range from all age levels and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is important that barriers such as the lack of access to period products are removed so that students are able to thrive in their learning.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality college education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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.

Mahalo,
Rouel Velasco

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:52:49 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Master of Public Health student at the University of Hawaii Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. Menstruation products should be freely available in all bathrooms everywhere. Though I recognize we must start somewhere. As a menstruating person I often feel obligated to carry around menstrual products in case me or someone else needs them unexpectedly. I am lucky in this way that I am able to access these products whereas some may not have the means to do so. I hope that by starting at the University we can offer these products free in other areas as well. Menstruation products are not just something people want, it is need that must be equally attainable such as toilet paper.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:19:39 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryen Hampton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe that it is a right for women or menstruating people, especially young people, to have affordable access to hygienic products. Identifying as a teenage girl myself, I know how hard it is to find products that are affordable as well as effective. I think that providing menstrual products shows that the facility actually cares about students who have periods.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 9:27:05 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Harris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Providing free menstrual products in restrooms across the UH system would ensure equal access to a basic necessity that is considered in many countries to be a civil right. If the university can provide toilet paper, soap, paper towels and toilet seat covers surely they can provide basic menstrual products. It should also be noted that 55% of the UH student population are female.

HB481 Testimony

**By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College**

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty and it requires low investment and a reasonable budget.

Passing this bill is important and much needed because it affects student success. All women have a story of needing a menstrual product in public. When I first started teaching at Kapi‘olani Community College, my period started about five minutes before I was scheduled to teach my last history class for the day. Cancelling class was not an option because it would have negatively impacted the students and their progress in the course. I didn’t have any period products, there was no one around to ask (which is often embarrassing and uncomfortable especially if you don’t know the person well), and there were no product dispensers, not even old-fashioned ones that required quarters, anywhere on campus. So, what did I do? I went to the bathroom, used toilet paper to craft a “makeshift” pad, took my sweatshirt and wrapped it around my waist, and taught my one hour and fifteen minute class. I told students that I could not stay after class due to an appointment and I immediately headed home. This is just one of thousands of stories which justifies providing free menstrual products on campus.

In Fall 2017, members of the Alpha Kappa Psi chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society at Kapi‘olani Community College (for which I am the advisor), identified the lack of menstrual products on campus as a major concern, which caused students to miss class if they unexpectedly started their period and did not have any products with them. They also noted that many students could not afford period products and thus were forced to stay home during their menstrual cycles each month. They met with the Chancellor, Louise Pagotto, who tasked them with researching the issue and reporting back on their findings. The students did a petition drive and got nearly 1,000 signatures (from students, faculty, and staff) in support of the college providing free menstrual products on campus. They also decided that it was important to provide the Chancellor and other administrators with specific Kapi‘olani CC data. To gather the data, the students started a pilot project and for the semester provided free tampons and pads in four restrooms on campus.

They hung “makeshift” plastic tub dispensers, posted signage, and spread awareness on campus. One Honor Society student was responsible for monitoring, refilling, and recording the data for one of the four restrooms at least once a week for the entire semester. All of the products (tampons and pads) were purchased using the Honor Society chapter money, which comes from a one-time \$20 dues for new members. One of the Hallmarks of PTK is service and this, according to the students, was a much needed campus service project. During the semester, the chapter received unsolicited positive feedback from our campus community. One professor wrote, “Just wanted to say how much I appreciate the Honor Society’s project! I used the ‘Iliahi restroom yesterday, and saw the feminine hygiene products in the bathroom. Great idea and so needed! Another staff member wrote, “I am so proud of our campus today. Please give a shout out to the KCC Honor Society for setting up free feminine hygiene products throughout our

HB481 Testimony

By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College

space. Although I am an analyst now and don't interact with students as much, I know that during my time as a reference librarian, there were occasions when women needed something and we didn't have a pad or tampon available. This will make for a more comfortable campus. Great work!”

In Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, the first year of the pilot project, a total of 1,944 tampons and 2,732 pad were used. This was an indication of the success of the initiative, but more importantly that there was a clear need for providing free menstrual products and so the Honor Society students felt it necessary to continue to do this. As the recipient of a 2019 Women’s Campus Club grant, I was able to help the students scale up the program, by purchasing seven one-touch dispensers that each hold 50 tampons and 50 pads. Since the project began we have dispensed over 10,000 tampons and 15,000 pads.

So, today on the Kapi‘olani CC campus seven restrooms, including one gender-neutral restroom dispense free menstrual products. The seven restrooms that were chosen were selected in such a way that all areas of the campus are covered, meaning that no one is more than one or two buildings away from a restroom where free products are available. There are signs in the restrooms that don’t have dispensers telling people which restrooms do. The awareness campaign is ongoing. The students created an information flyer about the availability of the free products and what restrooms they are located in, which is part of the New Student Orientation packet that all incoming students receive. The campus newspaper, *Kapi‘o*, does an information story each year. Student Congress includes information about the products in their campus newsletter. And, an announcement is regularly posted in the *Bulletin*.

For the past five years, the free menstrual product program has continued to be fully student driven (monitoring, refilling product, and recording data) and student funded, both through the Honor Society dues and a grant from Student Congress last year, which comes from student fees. Despite the success and scalability of the KapCC program, it is not sustainable. The Alpha Kappa Psi chapter does not take in much money each year through the one-time new member chapter dues and thus, we do not have a large operating budget. Limited funds are what necessitated that we reach out to Student Congress for help in continuing this program. Furthermore, it is my belief that we as a university system should not be asking our students (through chapter dues and student fees) to pay for menstrual products, which are necessary due to one’s biology. We don’t ask campus clubs, societies, or Student Congress, to buy toilet paper, soap, paper towels, or toilet seat covers and we shouldn’t be asking students to pay for menstrual products, which are dispensed much less frequently and thus more affordable for the university when compared to these other restroom products. Student monies should be used for other student success programs.

In Fall 2017, Kapi‘olani Community College had a total enrollment of 7,095 students of which 4,178 identified as female or 58.9 percent of the student body. In Fall 2022, the total population was 5,828 students, of which 64.5 percent identified as female. Despite the fact that enrollment has declined over the years, the number of students who identify as female has increased by 5.6

HB481 Testimony

By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College

percent. As of Fall 2020, there were 511 total employees at Kapi‘olani CC and 282 identify as female, which is 55%. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in fall 2020 in the US, female students made up 58 percent of total undergraduate enrollment (9.2 million students), and male students made up 42 percent (6.7 million students). With such an overwhelming majority of individuals who identify as female, it is clear that there is a need for the UH system to provide free menstrual products on all campuses.

Additionally, every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai‘i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty. In Fall 2020, KapCC held a “Fuel for Finals” drive in which students were given tickets to choose free basic necessities, like food, menstrual products, toiletries, etc. The most popular items were food and the second most popular were menstrual products, which indicates many of our students experience some degree of period poverty.

This bill addresses the need that menstrual products be freely available on all UH campuses, as it directly affects more than half of our students, faculty, and staff. More importantly having the UH system assume control of and funding for the distribution of free products ensures that they will be regularly available when needed. Although there are various independent campus initiatives, including the one at KapCC, they are not sustainable and there will come a point when these campuses will no longer be able to provide the free products, which will negatively affect the students. Providing free menstrual products leads to greater student success. Please vote “yes” to support this bill and help make UH a leader nationally in promoting public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity for all members of our campus communities.

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

Julie M. Rancilio

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:21:17 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Esteves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB-481, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because I have experienced this inequity first hand.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:21:59 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicelle Herron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

My name is Nicelle Herron and I live in Kailua-Kona, on Hawai'i Island. I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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. This is unacceptable.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:46:30 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystine Ann Cabrera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Krystine Cabrera. This bill is really important to me because as a graduate student, I have struggled with affording and obtaining the appropriate menstrual products during my menstrual cycle. Due to this, I've actively fought period poverty with projects focused on menstrual equity. In August 2022, I won a \$500 grant from the Pad Project which provided me with 2,376 menstrual pads to distribute. I've been distributing pads in the East-West Center Residence Halls. While useful, I think we can take this a step further and have it available across campus, and also have more menstrual product options available. In the Fall of 2022, I hosted two film nights focused on period poverty and had discussions with international students of the East-West Center community in regard to their struggles with affording menstrual products in the community. At the East-West Center, the International graduate students have difficulty affording living here, going to school, and caring for themselves during their menstrual cycle. My fellow students have reported to me that they will often put menstrual products last on their priority so they can afford food and will skip class due to having their menstrual period. This is unacceptable. These students have the right to their education and these products are a basic need for all menstruating individuals.

I believe in Bill SB954 and would hope that you support this to help the menstruating students in our community.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:07:52 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. As a student at UH, unexpectedly getting my period could cause me to have to miss class or meetings if I don't have period products with me. From a perspective of conserving mental bandwidth for what is important, requiring about half the population to constantly think about their biology is a very basic state to be in - this is an institution of higher education, we're not trying to keep the menstruating people in a more basic state than the rest, are we? Not having the cushion of knowing we'll be covered if we get our period is a barrier to fully participating in academia. It's also surprising that the bill notes "including the community college campuses", as though its possible they would be excluded. Research clearly shows that the more poor someone is, the more likely they are to experience barriers to participation in class due to not having period products. Our community college campuses service more financially disadvantaged students than the primary campuses - CCs should be first to receive these products. Thank you!

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:53:20 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mackenzie Manning	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I enthusiastically support HB481 to help our Uh students with their basic needs. We have made progress in not taxing feminine care products and I think this is a natural next step that the UH should support in furthering their mission of equity. Please pass this bill

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:54:06 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because as a faculty member I have witnessed students' needs in the restroom next to my office as well as in restrooms in various classroom buildings on the Kapiolani Community College campus. I am also aware of some students' financial difficulty in buying books or paying for tuition, and this bill would eliminate an extra expense that female students bear.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:57:42 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Yen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members, I am testifying in support of HB481 on behalf of empowering women in Hawai'i. I support this bill because I personally have experienced the humility and dreading feeling of being unprepared during my menstrual cycle. This bill will benefit women in so many ways, and it is needed to achieve equity. Mahalo for taking the time to take my voice into account.

February 9, 2023

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because as a DOE Community Homeless Concerns Liaison, I have witnessed the suffering and negative effects of K-12 students not having access to period products. Many of our low-income and homeless students and families have skipped buying period products such as pads for things such as food or water because for some of our families, these items are considered “luxury” items. Some students have even resorted to making pads out of wadded toilet paper and scolded for using the restroom during work/class time in order to “save” money for more “important” things.

These students should never have to choose food or period products and should simply be provided these products free of charge so they can focus on learning.

Our college students are not exempt from this problem and they too also suffer from period poverty and should be given access to period products just like their K-12 counterparts. With access to period products, our college students can better focus on their education, do better academically and can soon have the skills and credentials for a successful career. Please let us do our best to pass this bill so we can end period poverty on our college campuses.

Respectfully,

Courtney Hamakawa

DOE- East Hawaii Community Homeless Concerns Liaison

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:09:09 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology,

I am in strong support of HB481. This is an important step towards menstrual equity for members of our community who cannot afford to pay for period products. University students are burdened with all kinds of financial obligations and many of them are parents with children to provide for. Not everyone will need these products at no cost, but we should ensure that those who do need them have access.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:18:06 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edith Neumiler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB481 to require free period products at University of Hawaii and colleges.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:36:30 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Primavera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the passage of HB 481 which requires the University of Hawaii and its campuses to provide menstrual products free of charge. I would also like to request an amendment that will include all education satellites as well. This bill is an important step to end period poverty.

Menstrual products are not inexpensive. Also, the DOE has menstrual products available due to the passage SB 2821 so it is logical that institutions of higher education also follow suit. We must not erect further barriers for our students that will discourage or inconvenience them from fulfilling their academic dreams.

Thank you.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:19:10 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Qian Rao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481.

It is very important to promote healthy equity in the environment where students pursue high-quality education. Each girl student deserves to get great care and use menstrual products freely on campus. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

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

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Bill DeCosta
Luke A. Evslin



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

February 9, 2023

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON**

**HB 481, Relating to Menstrual Equity
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Friday, February 10, 2023
2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Perruso and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong SUPPORT of HB 481, Relating to Menstrual Equity. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a Councilmember of the County of Kauai. This Bill would require the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including community colleges.

The Kauai County Council recognizes that "period poverty," the term used to describe the inability to access menstrual products, often negatively impacts an individual's health and well-being. The Kauai County Council supports the Ma'i Movement and has installed and will stock a menstrual products dispenser in the women's public restroom in the Historic County Building, and encourages other governmental entities to adopt similar solutions.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 481. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kauai County Council

LY:lc

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:53:21 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaye Lyn Fiona Mae Agabao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The HB481 bill requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products for free to students at any campus, including community colleges. Just like toilet paper, soap, and toilet seat coverings, why can't menstrual products be free and provided as well?

I am testifying in support of the HB481 bill. It is important to those who cannot afford it financially (or if they do not have the time, and to those who need the product itself because sometimes *it* would come unexpectedly.

I have experienced the need for menstrual products during my time in high school. I had gotten *it* when I did not have the product at hand, so I asked a stranger if they had an extra. Fortunately, they were kind enough to hand me one with no judgement.

I believe that this is an opportunity to educate those who do not understand the basic equity and gender equality as it addresses the issue.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:47:01 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazmin Potes Mangra	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Lack of access to menstrual products is not just an issue for elementary, junior high, middle and high school students, college students can have complications to their academic/career experience due to periods. There was a day I had to miss class because my period came early, and I didn't have any period products on me at the time. I went to the bathroom to create something to catch it out of toilet paper. Sometimes at inopportune moments in the middle of the day I have to wait to be able to get home to clean up. Pads and tampons are not cheap, yet menstruators have to buy them every month, which is another expense on top of a huge financial burden required of college students, especially here in Hawai'i. Reusable products are not always an option as they can be expensive, difficult to use, and hard to maintain when you don't have access to private, single-person bathrooms.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:54:11 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grischa Friel	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a woman who, growing up, was categorized as low-income, can understand the struggle of parents providing basic necessities for their children. I, too, experienced what it was like for my parents to not be able to afford menstrual products. So although I understand the struggle, I disagree in making it a responsibility of our educational system to provide a solution. It seems much more appropriate for the state to provide these products to the schools. I also believe that it's much more important for menstrual products to be provided for middle schools and high schools rather than colleges only because at this point in time, college students should have access to some type of income. Sam's club sells 80 ct. "Always Pads" for about \$15 for two packs. This can last at the very minimum, about two months worth. So \$15 every two months for a year equals about an estimated \$75. This is manageable for college students.

Again, I support menstrual products being offered at no cost for middle and high school students who have no access to earning their own income, however, I do not support the educational systems being responsible for purchasing them. It's the state obligation to provide this for the schools.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:04:24 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arlene May Laeno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have experienced a few times that unfortunately situation in between my classes in the Leeward Community College where it was not pay-day yet and I got my period. My mom's job hours got cut and so buying feminine hygiene products versus paying for rent was a choice we were forced with for a few months. It's embarrassing to say that I had to use a handful to get me through the menstrual days. I try to ask my friends, but it's not something you want to keep advertising---- that you can't buy the bare necessities!

In Fall 2020, 58.9 percent of the student body identified as female, and as of fall 2022, 64.5 percent do. Despite the fact that enrollment has declined over the years, the number of students who identify as female has increased by 5.6 percent. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the fall of 2020 in the US, female students made up 58 percent of total undergraduate enrollment (9.2 million students), and male students made up 42 percent (6.7 million students). With such an overwhelming majority of individuals who identify as female, it is clear that there is a need for the UH system to provide free menstrual products on all campuses. As of Fall 2020, 55% of the employees at Kapi‘olani Community College are women. This bill will positively affect the majority of the students, faculty, and staff in the UH system, moving us closer to gender equity.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty. In the Fall of 2020, KapCC held a “Fuel for Finals” drive in which students were given tickets to choose free basic necessities, like food, menstrual products, toiletries, etc. The most popular items were food and the second most popular were menstrual products, which indicates many of our students experience some degree of period poverty.

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.

Mahalo,
Arlene May Laeno

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:28:31 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emi Shigekane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and Committee Members,

My name is Emi Shigekane, a high school senior, and I am testifying in support of HB481 because menstrual products are a basic hygienic necessity that all menstruators should have access to, especially students.

Thank you for taking the time to hear this bill and my testimony,

Emi

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:32:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Chou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:31:20 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelli Y. Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please submit true gender equality at all places in all levels of education. Mahalo!

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:40:26 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cori Sparks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because menstruation shouldn't hold back our students from learning and growth, both personally and for the state of Hawaii as a whole.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:40:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mia Ogata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481 as it is a great first step to ending period poverty. I am a student at UH Manoa and I have been impacted by the lack of attainable menstrual products on campus. Just recently, I had unexpectedly gotten my period during class. As my period had arrived early, I was unprepared with no products on me. Only a handful of bathrooms on campus have menstrual product dispensers, and even if I could find one I didn't have a coin to purchase the pad or tampon. Due to this I was forced to leave class early, to find the menstrual products I urgently needed. I proceeded on what felt like a wild goose chase around campus trying to find menstrual products. This whole ordeal left me feeling stressed and anxious. My mind was racing with thoughts about what I was missing in class, if my period was showing through my pants, and what to do if I couldn't find menstrual products in time. But luckily enough I didn't stumble across a dispenser, but a map showing that our campus Women's Center provided free menstrual products. I rushed to the Women's Center and found the products I needed and was able to take care of myself.

My experience of being unprepared for my period, provides only just a little insight to what those who face period poverty can experience throughout their entire lifetime. I don't want what happened to me to happen to any other students. The lack of accessible period products on campus disrupted my education as I missed the rest of my class. I don't want to have to see other students compromise their education because of the lack of accessible menstrual products on campus. So I stand in strong support of HB481 and I thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:55:48 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Regal	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It will be helpful to have feminine hygiene products available on campus so I don't need to leave. If I leave campus, that will mean missing class. The last thing I want to happen is to miss out on class time.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:59:50 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JarraeTehani Manasas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a women and UH Alumn, I strongly support HB481, which requires the Univeristy of Hawai'i to provide menstral products free of charge to all students on any UH Campus including the Community Colleges. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstral inequity on campuses and end period pverty that requires low investment.

Mahalo,

JarraeTehani Manasas, Kailua Kona Hawai'i

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:00:42 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nawaioluokealoha Makua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB481 because I believe that having the option for free menstrual products available is a necessity. There are times when your menstrual cycle comes early or late and are not prepared for it. The university provides toilet paper, soap, paper towels, and toilet seat covers and they don't ask students to pay for or bring their own. I feel that menstrual products should be the same, and accessed freely on all campuses. In addition, condoms are also provided for free on campus, especially through the student health services. If the college is able to provide condoms to promote safe sex, then they should also be able to provide menstrual products to promote women's health.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:17:56 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelina Woo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members, my name is Angelina Woo, I am a student, and am in support of HB481. Having free and easily accessible menstrual products around Hawai‘i is simply giving aloha to our youth. We are known as the “aloha state”. We are supposed to be a generous, kind, and welcoming community that takes care of one another. How are we supposed to live up to that reputation or say we are the aloha state if we cannot give our future everything they need to succeed? Many women, including myself, have experienced getting a bloody surprise on campus. Instant panic will rush through our veins as we try to search for a pad. We cannot control our periods, and more often than not they come without warning or off schedule. In college, it can be hard to obtain friends to panic text for help. Or even if you do have friends to call they could be on the other side of campus, and therefore, inaccessible. By having period products around campus for college students you can take off one of their worries and vulnerabilities. This small step could help thousands of students and help spread the aloha of your council. So on behalf of every woman and girl, please help us feel safe and cared for at school by providing the products we need to feel secure. Mahalo nui loa

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:15:49 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Kapana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because I believe students should be able to learn to worry free and this would help level the field for all students.

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

Best,

Jamie

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:29:15 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alick Yang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of HB481, which would require the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge across all campuses. This bill would be an important step towards addressing period poverty. Having adequate access to menstrual products would reduce the risk of urogenital infection and give reprieve to those who are uncomfortable or stressed due to the lack thereof. In addition to the mental ease the bill would provide, it would be good progression socially. Adressing the people who feel shame or a loss of dignity, and those who fear attending school due to their period. This bill would remove one among many barriers of entry for those who seek education, and be steps to being acessible for all.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:27:33 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Sato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Danielle, and I'm currently a medical student at the University of Hawai'i John A Burns School of Medicine. I know not only from personal experience, but also working with current and future patients, the significant the power that access to menstrual products can have for individuals. This is why I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

College is a place of learning for the young people of our islands. 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. Without proper access to menstrual hygiene products -- which are everyday necessities just like hand soap or toilet paper -- students are not able to thrive in this learning environment. Further, inaccessibility of menstrual products only futhers unjust inequities across socioeconomic status, and most negatively affects individuals who are already struggling to meet the financial demands of higher education. This bill promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:40:23 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Kaio	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Michelle Kaio

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:37:01 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian Nakihei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the Committee,

I support HB481 because it will benefit people who experience periods, especially college students. In this changing world of rising costs, every dollar I have is spent with much scrutiny. College students, who are notoriously known for not having enough financial support, should not face the danger of not having access to period products. These products are essential for the health and well-being of our students, who are our future. Students should have free access to period products at all times not only for the reasons mentioned earlier but also so they can perform in their academics and lives to the best of their ability.

Mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:40:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ikaika Vares-Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Ikaika Vares-Young, am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students at any University of Hawaii's campuses, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes the necessary steps to address menstrual inequality on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. Women that I know personally have been affected by period poverty when in reality, it is as much of a necessity such as toilet paper. Women don't choose to have periods.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:53:13 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Quia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481 which requires the university of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address, menstrual inequity on campuses, and end period Poverty that requires low investment.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:40:23 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moani Pomare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Moani Pomare, and I support this bill. It is important to supply people who have their ma'i with materials that will not take away from their education.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 1:57:29 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiana Farrar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481 which requires the university of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address, menstrual inequity on campuses, and end period Poverty that requires low investment.”

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:03:07 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolina Suhré	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Good afternoon, My name is Carolina Suhré. I am currently a sophomore at UH studying sustainability. Sustainability is something I'm passionate about because it affects all aspects of life, not just the environment. Sustainability is not just reusing Tupperware, it is also creating systems within our community that uplift those in need. As a student from Texas I have seen constant attacks on women throughout my life. Here in Hawai'i, I feel safer. However, there is a distinct lack of support from institutions in regards to period care and supplies. It is an honor and right of passage to bleed, it is who I am. Your period has a mind of its own though, and sometimes can sneak up on you when you just happened to forget your pack of supplies. I believe that it is a basic right to be able to not only have access to pads and tampons in all public spaces, but they should be free. In the current state of the world, in and out of public health crisis, it is rare to carry cash and coins, which these dispensers often require. Making the step towards accessibility is one giant leap for this legislative body and the world for menstruating individuals.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:02:08 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicolas Gibbons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481 which requires the university of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address, menstrual inequity on campuses, and end period Poverty that requires low investment.

February 9, 2023

To: House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Representative Amy Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

From: GF Ka'iulani Akamine, 808-258-1148

Re: In support of HB481

Aloha

My name is Ka'iulani Akamine and I am submitting testimony as a private citizen but want to draw up my experience as a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i- West O'ahu.

This bill will help to address a rarely discussed issue that has a big impact on many of the students at the University of Hawaii at West O'ahu because women comprise 63% of our overall enrollment. I humbly ask for your support for HB481.

As you already know many households are struggling to make ends meet and the exorbitant cost of living in Hawaii has caused a huge diaspora of local families leaving their island homes. I believe that menstrual projects should be available like toilet paper. I would be surprised if there was one woman out there who did not experience leakage at least once from their menstrual cycles. When this happens it is not only deeply embarrassing but it may have been the reason for our absence. Absences from a family gathering, attendance at school resulting in missing that project presentation, possibly important lecture time, missing out on earning attendance points towards a passing grade and sometimes it can be a call out from work. During these times women rarely confess - I leaked or the bathroom vending machine only accepted quarters, which I did not have and often even if I did have the quarters, the machines are inoperable and will not dispense the much needed products. Instead we may have to go home or sometimes we just stay home. We say nothing and if we are pressed or required to provide a reason, we just say I was not feeling well.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity by reducing health risks, alleviating the burden of period poverty, and protecting the dignity of all menstruating people. Menstrual products are a basic necessity akin to toilet paper, hand soap, and other personal hygiene products, but are economically out of reach for a growing number of menstruating girls,

women, and gender-diverse people. Establishing wider access to free menstrual products would help to ensure more inclusive and equitable access to public facilities, reduce barriers faced by visitors to state buildings meeting basic needs, and promote greater menstrual equity in the State.

I believe that the State of Hawai'i can be like other progressive countries that already offer period products free of charge such as Scotland, New Zealand and Kenya.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. Please support menstrual equity and period empowerment!

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:06:56 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendelin Medeiros	Hawaii Community College Palamanui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For some women/students we cannot predict or have normal or regular menses so, having supplies on campus available for us helps us get through the day in classes to finish my classes till I can go somewhere to provide on my own.

Some us fall short on a monthly, so to have the supplies available to help supplement our needs at the moment will help alleviate the stress on us. It's already stressful every woman goes thru on a monthly basis. This support would be ideal for us.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Amy Perruso, Chair

Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 9, 2023

Written Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology in support of
HB481

Aloha Honorable Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the HET Committee,

My name is Kelsey Nakagawa, and I am a 21 year old student attending Chaminade University of Honolulu's School of Nursing and a Kāne'ōhe resident. I am writing in support of HB481, and I am grateful for the opportunity to testify on behalf of myself and my community. As a female student and menstruator, I kindly ask you all to support providing free period products on all University of Hawai'i campuses.

Although I would not directly benefit from this bill I still believe that all menstruating students should have access to menstrual products. Students are juggling many responsibilities and endure a significant financial burden with tuition costs. This can make affording period products difficult for many students. Students are at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa or Community College campuses to learn and better themselves to join the workforce, so the government needs to support and protect students' basic health needs. Supporting students is supporting all of our futures.

There are times where I forget a pad or tampon, and I unexpectedly get my period while in class. I instantly feel dread and anxiety. Instead of focusing on my lecture I have to plan how I will get a pad and where the nearest restroom is. I also think about what I will do if I leak through on my pants. Providing free period products and addressing period poverty can help students focus on achieving their academic goals on and off their periods. Thank you all again for your time and consideration. I will deeply appreciate it if the House Committee on Higher Education and Technology supports HB481.

Mahalo nui,



Kelsey Nakagawa

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:23:59 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
susan iverson	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because I have had to find places that provided free period products due to the inability to pay for them. Since placing free period products in the women's restrooms at Shidler College of Business at UH Manoa, I have had numerous students come up to me to thank me. They not only took the products due to financial reasons, but also due to the immediate need and emergencies.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:26:34 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because having menstrual products readily available to everyone for free will have a huge positive impact for students at all UH campuses. This will help people who menstruate save thousands of dollars in their lifetime. Therefore, allows students to use that money towards their education and other necessities in life. Hawai'i holds a diverse population of students, many of them who already have barriers and not having access to period products should not be another barrier to their education.

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:19:19 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonia Blackiston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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.

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair

Friday, February 10, 2023

Support for H.B. 481, RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY.

Dear Chairs and Committee members, I write to you today **in support of H.B. 481.**

My name is Olivia Cornejo and I am a Masters of Social Work candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa specializing in Health. As a menstruating person and college student, I am in strong support of providing free menstrual products to students on any University of Hawai'i campus.

At UH Mānoa specifically, only a select few restrooms have menstrual products. Personally, I have had instances where this lack of access has disrupted my education by forcing me to walk to an entirely different building during vital class time because of a natural bodily process that can not be controlled.

The menstrual product dispensers also charge for the products, putting an undue burden on menstruating individuals who may not be able to afford these essential hygiene products. A 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity report for the University of Hawai'i found that **58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity**, and **14% experienced homelessness** in the previous year.

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. Lack of access to menstrual products should not be a factor that affects a student's physical health or ability to learn and thrive in higher education.

I strongly urge the committee to **pass H.B. 481**. Everyone should have the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Olivia Cornejo

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:30:37 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Rep. Amy A. Peruruso, Chair, Rep. Jeanne Kapela, Voice Chair and Members of the Higher Education and Technology Committee

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN

DATE: February 10, 2023 2:30pm

RE:HB 481. STRONG SUPPORT

Good Afternoon. I am Patricia Bilyk and I attended the University of Hawaii for my graduate degrees in Maternal Child Public Health and Nursing.

As a poor graduate student, i know how it was to have to choose between getting something I needed personally or not having supplies because it was that time of the month or eating or paying for gas (I lived in Mililani). It would have been so helpful for me to have feminine products available in the restrooms at the School of Nursing and School of Public Health to help me.

i encourage this Committee to pass this Bill out of Committee and help these individuals who are in need each month. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 481.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 2:29:30 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having free menstrual products for public and charter schools has completely changed the comfort for students in the restroom and their environment. Once that access is gone it takes away from their education along with the comfort of the school. After conducting a survey from the age of 12 to 18 I found that girls/ people who menstrate have found difficulties having access to products regardless of income. Having to ask faculty for a pad or tampon can be nerve racking especially having it for the first time. My mom who works at Haiku Elementary was able to supply students with free products. She was shocked to find that girls even at the young age of 8 were using supplies.

Having the ability to have access to free products at the College would help people out a ton. Having the ability to grab a product with no stigma or missing class to grab one would greatly improve UH Maui College. I strongly support this bill being passed. As a woman who has struggled to have access to products at school I feel this would help many people. Having free access at Kihei Charter has changed students attendance and comfort to all. This needs to continue on in high education like Maui Community College.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 7:40:03 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jingyu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All good.

To: Hawaii State House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 10, 2023, 2:30pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 309 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong is in strong support of SB481 Requiring University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students

Dear Members of the Higher Education & Technology Committee,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, am in strong support of SB481 relating to Menstrual Equity.

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. 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.

New [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 481.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 9:32:35 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Texeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the proposed legislation requiring the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges.

As a community college faculty member, I have experienced first-hand the difficulties our students have had when purchasing menstrual products, which can be an unexpected expense, especially for those who are already struggling to afford tuition and other necessary costs of attending college. Providing free menstrual products would greatly alleviate this financial burden and ensure that all students, regardless of their financial situation, have access to these essential items.

In addition, having access to menstrual products is a basic human right and necessary for the health and well-being of individuals who menstruate. The availability of these products on campus would reduce the stigma surrounding menstruation and promote a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

Furthermore, the provision of menstrual products on campus would demonstrate the University of Hawai‘i's commitment to gender equality and reproductive health. It would also set an example for other educational institutions and employers, encouraging them to provide menstrual products for their students and employees as well.

In conclusion, I strongly support the proposed legislation to require the University of Hawai‘i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai‘i campus, including the community colleges. Providing these essential products would improve the health and well-being of students, promote gender equality, and reduce financial stress for those in need. Thank you for considering this important matter.

Sincerely,

Cindy Texeira

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 10:12:21 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vera Zambonelli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HB481, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because as a menstruating person and once a student at UH I have experienced getting my period and not having access to menstrual products when on campus, which hampered my ability to get to class on time, be concentrated, and continue with my life without interruptions and worries.

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

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

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 11:47:20 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Vogel	Hawaii Community College	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

If the University of Hawaii is going to be the premier University of our State, then we must stand on the side of women and people who menstruate by eliminating this barrier to education. Supporting this bill will send a statement to the entire student body that we support women and that talking about sexuality and reproductive systems are not shameful.

HB-481

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 11:58:40 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/10/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisamarie Bensman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **HB481**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. I would like to request an amendment that education centers also be included in this bill. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. It reduces health risks and protects the dignity of all menstruating people.

Menstrual products are a basic necessity, toilet paper, hand soap, and other personal hygiene products, but are economically out of reach for a growing number of menstruating girls, women, and gender-diverse people.

Establishing wider access to free menstrual products would help to ensure more inclusive and equitable access to public facilities, reduce barriers faced by visitors to state buildings meeting basic needs, and promote greater menstrual equity in the State.

I support this bill because I am a professor at a local community college (and I speaking on behalf of myself, not my school) and I have students who have had to miss class because they can't afford menstrual products. Obviously, this puts students' academic success at risk. In the seven years, since my department has become aware of this important issue, we've been privately funding menstrual supplies for our building's bathroom. Students' usage, feedback, and appreciation has underscored the urgent need for such supplies, particularly in underserved communities.

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

Sincerely,

Lisamarie Bensman, Ph.D.