

February 5, 2024

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any University of Hawaii campus, including community colleges. A 2023 survey of University of Hawaii students by Mai Movement Hawaii and George Mason University, 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawaii system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

As a Hawaii DOE Homeless Liaison, I have witnessed the utter tragedy and shame that many of our homeless and low-income female students and families experience by having to go without feminine hygiene pads as for the families I work with, these items are considered “luxury” items. Some students have even been “scolded” for using the restroom during work/class time to make home-made pads out of wadded toilet paper. Some students have also missed school due to having periods and are embarrassed to go to school due to having no access to pads. We have to do all we can to make these already costly products less expensive and more accessible by being more readily available in more public restrooms including our older students attending our local universities and community colleges. I urge all of you to pass this much needed bill to provide some level of relief to make these severely needed period products more accessible and available for our college students.

Respectfully,

Courtney Hamakawa
DOE- East Hawaii Community Homeless Concerns Liaison



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 07, 2024

The Honorable Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Perruso and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB2177 RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB2177**, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

Currently, individuals with I/DD residing in licensed or certified homes receive a fixed \$50 monthly personal allowance for incidental expenditures. This allowance, established in 2007, is intended to cover various needs such as telephone expenses, hobbies, prescription drugs, haircuts, clothing, and other incidental items. However, it has become increasingly apparent that essential items like menstrual products, shampoo, and deodorant are often competing for these limited funds.

Females living in these circumstances should not be compelled to allocate their sparse allowance to meet their basic menstrual product needs. House Bill 2177 represents a positive step forward in addressing this issue, ensuring that individuals with I/DD have access to necessary menstrual products without compromising their personal allowance for other essential items. We firmly believe that this bill aligns with our commitment to advocating for the well-being and dignity of individuals with developmental disabilities. By removing financial barriers to menstrual products, HB2177 supports the daily lives of those who require these essential items.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB2177**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



**Chair Perruso
Vice Chair Kapela**

House Committee on Higher Education

**Wednesday, February 7th, 2024
2:00 PM**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2177
RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY**

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, “to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.” The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission is in **strong support** of **HB2177**.

Inequities in education systems have long persisted and disadvantaged groups of youth throughout Hawai‘i. One facet of these inequities can be tackled today through HB2177 by addressing the lack of resources and the stigma associated with menstruation. As the text of the bill states, the University of Hawai‘i is “statutorily prohibited from depriving a person of the privileges of the university on the basis of sex.” Menstruation is an involuntary biological process that has been found to negatively impact the academic and social life of menstruating

individuals.¹ It is critical to understand the impacts of menstruation that affect how the youth of Hawai‘i engage and participate in their education.

At the same time, the stigma associated with menstruation hinders productive discussions to address such inequities. A 2021 report from the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women in collaboration with the Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i provides additional context to how period poverty in Hawai‘i came to be, rooted in the ideas and decisions of Western missionaries.² Understanding barriers to access to menstruation products and the current stigma surrounding the discussion can guide our understanding of how women, trans men/boys, and gender non-conforming people have been treated as unequal in society, and thus seek to change it.

Menstruation is a long-silenced conversation. The invisibility of period poverty has thus negatively impacted Hawai‘i’s youth as they lose out on time in school and job opportunities, and face shame when seeking out the support they deserve. Making this support willingly and readily available at the University of Hawai‘i campuses is a significant first step in addressing menstrual inequity in Hawai‘i. Our youth have the right to feel safe and dignified, no matter what their biological processes are.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission
hawaiistateyc@gmail.com

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8886240/>

²

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



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
Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

By

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

HB 2177 – RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

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

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 2177 and writes to provide information regarding the UH plans to provide menstrual products on all its campuses.

As reported in our response to Senate Resolution 23, SD1 (SR 23) regarding providing free menstrual products, all University of Hawai'i campuses have implemented various methods to provide free products in restrooms and other high-traffic locations on their campuses. Following the compilation and review of information about the current status of providing free menstrual products on every campus and how current efforts are funded, **the University of Hawai'i systemwide leadership committed to ensure the provision of menstrual products free of charge to students at all of its university, community college, and education center campuses.** As a result of our current efforts and future commitment, we do not believe this bill is necessary.

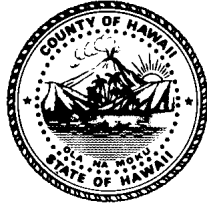
While UH further implements this action, free products are already provided in a number of locations across every campus:

- UH Maui College has placed a basket of tampons and pads *in all* women's and men's restrooms on campus. Baskets are refilled on average every two weeks (or as needed) by operations and maintenance.
- Leeward Community College has menstrual products available *in all* women's, men's and gender-neutral restrooms at the Pu'uloa (Pearl City) campus and in the women's and gender-neutral restrooms at the Wai'anae Moku campus with plans to expand to men's restrooms in Spring 2024. Supplies are checked and refilled on a regular basis. The campus also distributes menstrual products out of their food pantry, Hānai'iā Leeward, and out of their Student Health Center.
- UH Mānoa provides menstrual products within the restrooms in the Campus Center (CC) as well as in the Food Vault Hawai'i Pantry, the Queen Lili'uokalani Center restrooms, and a few other women's and men's restrooms in buildings across campus.

- UH Hilo has 30 dispensers installed in women's, men's and gender-neutral restrooms around campus. The supply of products is housed and restocked by Auxiliary Services but also supported by the Women's Resource Center and the student government, UH Hilo Student Association (UHHSA).
- UH West O'ahu has dispensers in several women's restrooms on campus. The dispensers are refilled on a weekly basis.
- Windward Community College has supplies available in all female and gender-neutral bathrooms on campus.
- Hawai'i Community College distributes menstrual products out of their Kahuaola Basic Needs Center and two of the most utilized restrooms on campus.
- Kaua'i Community College has menstrual products available in their Food Pantry, and Pantry staff also regularly refill dispensers in several women and gender-neutral bathrooms on campus.
- Kapi'olani Community College has seven restrooms, 6 women's and 1 gender-neutral, on campus that each dispense 50 pads and 50 tampons. They are currently using about 180 products (tampons and pads) per week. All bins are maintained and refilled weekly by the students of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. The campus also distributes menstrual products from the Kamokila Student Center and the food pantry when available.
- Honolulu Community College distributes menstrual products in several women's, men's and gender-neutral restrooms and other specific program areas such as Hulili Ke Kukui, Student Life & Development, Early Childcare Education, Academic Counseling, TRIO, Career Services, and Academic Support. As of Spring 2024, the campus is working to provide more distribution points in various restrooms and offices.

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

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 6, 2024
TO: House Committee of Higher Education and Technology
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 2177

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

I am testifying in support of HB 2177 to require the University of Hawai'i (U.H.) to provide menstrual products at no cost to all students on any U.H. Campus, including community colleges. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University states that 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, which is three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty monthly, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Additionally we would insist that it be a priority to ensure that there are always adequate supplies of menstrual products to our Correctional Facilities, as an article from last year attached [here](#) details this is not always the case. It was shocking and horrifying to hear that menstruating inmates were given adult diapers instead of menstrual products. Please do all you can to remedy this situation from happening again by prioritizing access of proper menstrual products to those in need at all State-run facilities.

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

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 10:01:08 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taufa Setefano	Pan Pacific Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Taufa Setefano and I am writing on behalf of my UH Mānoa organization, Pan Pacific Association, and myself. I support measure HB2177 with UH campuses providing free menstrual products because it shows women support through providing accessible hygienic options conveniently at school. I would like to share a story that aligns with experiencing how this initiative has helped me personally. During my first week of school at UH Mānoa, I was super nervous to go to my classes as a young student and needed to use the bathroom because I was so anxious. I saw I had my period and was panicking because of not being prepared. Luckily, I was in one of the specific bathrooms where UH Mānoa has feminine products dispensers provided by the Ma'i Movement Hawai'i. This seemingly small gesture of support made my day less hectic and helped my anxiety level chill out which meant a lot to me and I am sure this happens to a lot of women too.

Women often have a lot going on just as any student especially during her time of the month and can often forget to stop at the convenient store to grab personal items, but this on campus access can save a lot of time and stress during that crucial moment. These dispensaries are little notes of support to all who need them; Please choose to support women through their process of navigating school! Mahalo!

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:42:28 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa W. Chong	Zen Den Midwifery	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this bill. Please support this measure and help eliminate period poverty in Hawaii.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:46:07 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Midwives Alliance of Hawaii	Midwives Alliance of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Help eliminate period poverty experienced by college students through out the UH system.



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

TO: Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair , Representative Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Higher Education and Technology

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (Retired)
Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Member

RE: HB 2177 Relating to Menstrual Equity

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 2pm

Good Afternoon Rep Perruso, Rep Kapela and Members of the Committee on Higher Education and Technology. I am Patricia Bilyk, Representing Breastfeeding Hawaii in SUPPORT of HB2177 Requiring the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

Breastfeeding Hawaii is a non profit 501c3 organization that protects, supports and promotes breastfeeding in our State. Within our mission is the desire for health equity and in this specific case, equity and protection of the menstrual needs of persons who are attending the University of Hawaii educational system.

When I was a graduate student at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, I had just had a baby and my husband was developing his business. These were lean times for us. Yet my period came each month (sometimes sooner and unpredictably). Often because of my busy life, I did not have what I needed nor the extra funds to pay for them at a vending machine in the lady's bathroom (if there even was such a machine). It would have been so very wonderful and comforting to me to have these products available without cost vs the alternate means I had to use to eventually get myself back home without a messy accident to Mililani!

Students need this extra convenience and comfort as they continue their education at the University of Hawaii campuses. Also these menstrual products need to be available in both the men and women restrooms.

We need to support our students in all ways we can so they are able to focus on their studies not wonder where they can get these necessary products to improve the quality of their life.

Thank you for hearing our views!



To: House Committee of Higher Education and Technology
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 @ 2:00 pm
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2177

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

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB2177** which would provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers at the University of Hawai'i. Menstrual products are vital for the physical and mental health, well-being and full participation of menstruators, including but not limited to girls, women, transgender and nonbinary individuals.

The lack of access to menstrual products is a clear form of gender-based exclusion and oppression. Period poverty, or the inability to access menstrual products, is widespread across higher education in Hawai'i. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University showed that *43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system* experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. *One in five students* experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty with a low investment. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Anna Ezzy
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

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



Hawaii Women's Coalition

TO: House Committee Higher Education & Technology
Chair Amy A. Perruso
Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela
Rep. Trish La Chica
Rep. Lisa Marten
Rep. Rose Martinez
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi
Rep. Sean Quinlan
Rep. Chris Todd
Rep. Justin H. Woodson
Rep. Diamond Garcia

DATE: February 7, 2024, 2:00 pm

FROM: Hawai'i Women's Coalition

RE: **Support for HB2177** - Requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms.

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

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 **HB2177** 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University found that 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.



Hawaii Women's Coalition

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.

HB2177 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.

For all of these reasons, the Hawai'i Women's Coalition is pleased to support **HB2177**. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Hawai'i Women's Coalition



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

FEBRUARY 7, 2024

HB2177 – RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports HB2177, relating to menstrual equity.

We believe that this bill meets the intent of our 2024 Legislative Priorities, specific to the priority of strengthening Education.

As the bill states, eighty percent of menstruating students in elementary through high school in Hawaii experience difficulties accessing menstrual products. Menstruating students who are unable to access menstrual products face a significant barrier to education compared to non-menstruating students.

We believe that a lack of access to menstrual products can adversely affect a student's access to learning.

We believe that "period poverty", or the inability to access menstrual products perpetuates educational and economic inequity.

We believe, as Democrats, it is our responsibility to remove this and any form of inequity affecting access to education. Everyone deserves equal access to receiving a quality education.

Therefore, on behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, we urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 679-7454
kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 352-6818
abbyalana808@gmail.com



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION **KOMIKINA PONO KIWILA O HAWAI‘I**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411, HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: (808) 586-8636 · FAX: (808) 586-8655 · TDD: (808) 586-8692

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

2:00pm

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

To: The Honorable Amy A. Perruso, Chair
The Honorable Jeanne Kapela, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

From: Liann Ebesugawa, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.B. No. 2177

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) supports H.B. No. 2177. This bill would require the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

The HCRC has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state-funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5. The HCRC provides these comments on H.B. No. 2177.

For individuals who menstruate, accessible period supplies may be the difference between going to class or having to miss out on educational opportunities. Periods may begin suddenly, and without affordable and easily accessible period products on campus, menstruating individuals may have to use makeshift means (toilet paper) or leave campus to get period supplies.

According to a 2019 study by Obstetrics and Gynecology, barriers to menstrual equity include the cost of purchasing period products, the accessibility of period products, and safe and secure toilet

facilities. Nearly two-thirds of low-income women were unable to afford period products at some point during the year, and nearly one-fifth experienced period poverty on a monthly basis. This study also found that individuals who are unable to access period products often have higher rates of school absenteeism and missed activities. This bill would address both the issues of cost and accessibility of period products for university students, reducing a barrier to accessing higher education for menstruating individuals.

In 2022, Governor Ige signed Act 113 into law (Gov. Msg. No. 1213), requiring the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) to provide free menstrual products to all students on all DOE school campuses. Menstrual inequity does not end at primary or secondary schools. The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2177 because it would address this inequity at the university level by requiring the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses.



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

Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 2:00 pm

RE: Support for HB 2177 - Requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

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

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i **strongly supports HB 2177** which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a locally grown organization committed to addressing menstrual inequity and ending period poverty (defined as "the inability to buy and access menstrual products, due to factors including but not limited to financial constraints, lack of menstrual health education, feelings of societal shame or stigma surrounding menstruation, and inadequate access to clean facilities to maintain proper hygiene"). Research suggests that this issue disproportionately affects students, low-income and houseless girls and women, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals, and those that are incarcerated. In the last two years, we have donated over 50,000 menstrual products to eight of the ten public higher education campuses and collaborated with inspiring groups working to meet the needs at the two other campuses. Thus, we are well-suited to comment on this issue.

Free menstrual products are a public health necessity for our state university system. These campuses support the everyday lives of thousands of students and employees and have long provided a safety net for some of our most vulnerable individuals.

In 2023, Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, in collaboration with George Mason University, surveyed University of Hawai'i students about their lived experiences regarding accessibility of menstrual products and its impacts at ten campuses and three education centers. We found that [43% of menstruating students](#) in the UH system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average of [14%](#). Equally concerning, one in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average of one in ten. The effects of period poverty disproportionately impacted specific groups, with Native Hawaiians experiencing the highest prevalence with 51% experiencing period poverty in the past year, and Filipinos with 41%.

Moreover, students experiencing period poverty in the UH system face challenges with basic needs, mental health, school, and work. Students experiencing period poverty were 2.5 times more likely to face food insecurity and 1.4 times more likely to face housing insecurity than those without. For those dealing with housing and/or food insecurity, period poverty is an added burden on mental health. These students were nearly two times more likely to report depressive symptoms compared to students with housing and/or food insecurity who did not experience period poverty.

Establishing wider access to free menstrual products ensures equitable access and increased participation in higher education and work. This is very much in line with the spirit of Title IX¹ legislation. Among students experiencing period poverty in the UH system, 81% experienced academic disruptions and 31% experienced depressive symptoms. In a state report, 50% of [survey](#) respondents reported missing school or work on account of menstruation and indicated that it significantly disrupted participation in their daily activities. Naturally, such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, take a significant toll on social and emotional health², and can decrease school and work performance. This was evident in our aforementioned local survey and a [national survey](#) of college-age menstruators published by George Mason University, which found that menstruators who experienced period poverty were 1.8 to 2.3 times more likely to report depressive symptoms than their peers³.

Although menstrual products are fundamental for the well-being of over half of the University of Hawai‘i population, they are economically out of reach for a growing number of those menstruators, and our survey findings support that notion. In addition, the 2021 University of Hawai‘i Mānoa Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) found 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity and 14% experienced homelessness. A [2021 report from the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i](#) revealed that 90% of respondents believed menstrual products were expensive and nearly 30% of respondents reported that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining menstrual products (often due to cost). These data highlight the need for coordinated support to address such health disparities.

The [Senate Resolution 23](#) in the 2023 legislative session is the first piece of policy or legislation that addressed menstrual inequity, and we recognize that the UH system and individual campuses have taken significant strides in fulfilling the resolution. Student organizations, such as Alpha Kappa Psi, ASUH, UH Women’s Center, and Delta Sigma Pi: Rho Chi Chapter, should also be applauded for their efforts to provide menstrual products on campuses. However, inequity in access across the campuses still exists and a more coordinated and consolidated system-wide effort is necessary to address disparities across the state. Furthermore, funding sources are inconsistent, with some coming from the administration and others from community donations or student grants. HB 2177 is an initiative that guarantees equal access and creates an inclusive environment on all campuses.

Finally, menstrual products are a basic health requirement for [59%](#) of the student population. In fact, the [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#) adopted new policies in 2021 that recognize the adverse physical and mental health consequences of limited access to menstrual products, and recommend increasing their

¹ Johnson, M. E., Waldman, E. G., & Crawford, B. J. (2020). Title IX & Menstruation. *Harv. JL & Gender*, 43, 225.

² [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

³ 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>

availability in schools and workplaces. Menstrual products should be considered as ubiquitous as toilet paper and paper towels, which are freely available and regulated throughout the University of Hawai‘i system to meet basic health and sanitation needs. The average cost of one menstrual product is \$0.18, 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. It is also well-established in research and our own statewide data⁴ that when menstruators have limited access to resources during menstruation, they seek other coping methods. This might include using unsafe and potentially harmful alternatives (e.g., leaves, paper towels, and socks), using menstrual products beyond the recommended time, or going with none at all. As a result, menstruators face potentially serious medical issues, including preventable infections that make them susceptible to cervical cancer, infertility, and toxic shock syndrome.

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. 3646 - Menstrual Equity For All Act of 2023](#). Furthermore, public and private universities nationwide are following suit and providing free period products throughout their campuses (e.g., the University of California System, University of Georgia, University of Cincinnati).

We urge you to support **HB 2177** and welcome you to contact us with any additional questions. Mahalo for your leadership and service to Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,
Nikki-Ann Yee
Co-Founder
Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i

⁴ [2021 report conducted by Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i](#)

PERIOD.

February 6, 2024

Testimony for Hawai'i House Bill 2177, A Bill Relating To Menstrual Equity.

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

We are writing in strong support of HB 2177, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students at any University of Hawai'i campus, including the community colleges. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campus and end period poverty that requires low investment.

As a global youth-fueled national nonprofit that strives to eradicate period poverty and stigma through service, education, and advocacy, PERIOD. is proud to follow the lead of Hawaiian menstrual equity organizations like the [Mai'i Movement](#) in support of House Bill 2177 as introduced. Our 250+ volunteer chapters around the world applaud this bill!

According to a September 2023 study, [nearly 1 in 4 students](#) in the United States struggled to purchase period products or were not able to purchase them at all. Furthermore, a research conducted specifically with college students by George Mason University, indicated that nearly [1 in 10 college students](#) experience period poverty, and are more likely to experience depression. This bill would allow the opportunity for University of Hawai'i students to eliminate an additional barrier to their education.

As staff members from a national organization, and a former University of Hawai'i student, we urge all members of this committee to do what is right and support HB 2177 today.

Mahalo,



Velika Yasay
Database Administrator
[PERIOD. Inc.](#),
Former University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Student



Damaris Pereda
National Programs Director
[PERIOD. Inc.](#),

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 5:26:19 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mamiko Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB2177, making free menstrual products available to all students on all University of Hawaii campuses. This supports health and sanitation. Just as we expect toilet paper, handwashing sinks, and diaper changing tables to be available for all, we should also expect period products to be available.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB2177.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 4:21:10 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiya-Amani John	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2177, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 4:28:49 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Ishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in strong support of HB2177. My name is Emma Ishihara and I am an alumni of the University of Hawaii. A lack of menstrual equity has been a major concern for students across all UH campuses. Access to pads, tampons, and other menstrual products has been historically limited due to lack of access and costs. This bill would remove school participation barriers for menstruating students and allow all students the opportunity to attend classes and activities at UH without bias.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. I hope you have a wonderful day.

Mahalo,

Emma.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 5:02:19 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jensen L Villaflor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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.

As someone who menstruates, period sanitation products are a basic necessity to function that can get very expensive over time and add a lot of stress to life as an independent student. With the other disruptive aspects of menstruation like hormonal changes, physical pain, mental distress, and social anxieties, lack of access to adequate sanitation products compounds these stressors unnecessarily. It would be such a relief if basic access was guaranteed on a widespread scale so students could put their energies and money into what they're passionate about.

A 2023 survey of University of Hawai‘i students by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai‘i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

More relevant statistics include:

A [2023 survey](#) of University of Hawai‘i students conducted by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University to understand their lived experiences regarding accessibility of menstrual products and its impacts found that:

- 43% of menstruating students experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average
- One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average
- Among students experiencing period poverty, 81% experienced academic disruptions and 31% experienced depressive symptoms
- Students experiencing period poverty were more likely to face food and/or housing insecurity

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

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 8:39:53 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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 have been out of college for quite awhile, but one of the things I will never forget was not having any money for things like menstrual products. It was humiliating. As a woman, I should never have to feel that way especially over having a medical occurrence happen on a monthly basis that I had no control over. I ask you as a previously poor student and as a woman to support this Bill.

Patricia Coon

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 9:19:06 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cameron Ahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of HB2177. Too many students at UH experience period poverty and this bill could help address this inequity.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:09:04 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Asia Maning	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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. Asia Maning

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:25:11 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **oppose** this Bill.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:50:33 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Chong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing this bill. I believe it is every persons right to have access to essential needs items such as period products. Supporting this will help end period poverty in Hawaii. This supports the success of menstruating students through out the UH system. I urge you support these positive changes as well.

Melissa Chong

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:52:16 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a graduate student at UH Manoa, I support HB2177. I know many students who struggle to afford basic necessities, and this bill would help alleviate the gendered precarity experienced by students. Mahalo for considering this important bill.

February 4, 2024

HB 2177

Relating to Menstrual Equity

Dear Honorable House Committee:

My name is Michele Baldovi, and I am a school counselor at Likelike Elementary School.

I am testifying in support of **HB217**. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity and end period poverty at all levels of education in Hawai'i. A bill (HB2821) was already passed to address inequality in our public schools and I am so grateful for the funding that allowed many Hawai'i schools to install period product dispensers and products for free for our students. It has made a difference for many of them!

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

As we encourage Hawa'ii's youth and other non-traditional students to appreciate the value of a college education, let's provide them with the resources to mitigate some of the barriers that may prevent them from realizing their college and career goals.

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

Sincerely,

Michele Baldovi

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 10:59:58 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik Meade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB2177. I support HB2177.

When I was a part time student at University of Hawai'i I knew a few young women who were full time and were food insecure. I cannot imagine having to make the choice between eating or purchasing menstruation products. Passing this bill would at least level the playing field for female students.

Please vote yes on HB2177.

Erik Meade

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 12:17:04 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Minton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2177

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:45:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 3:11:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Jarvis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 3:29:58 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 4:46:53 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiley Adolpho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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.

Kiley Adolpho

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 4:48:42 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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.

Pahnelopi McKenzie

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 5:10:20 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shayla-Ann Santos	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Periods are a natural bodily function that has been shamed and pushed aside for the comfortability of the public, but whose to say that it should be kept secret and put away. As I was growing up as a young girl, I was told to hide and be embarrassed about the blood I shed. Especially as a young girl going through early puberty, everyone teased me for maturing too quickly. Women and young girls should be supported because without the uterus there would be no us. Women should be brought up and empathized with from a young child so that we don't have to flee the scene of our first period and those to come in petrified shame. We need to be told that we're okay and this is just our body's way of introducing us to womanhood as it happens to every healthy female. People today suffer from period poverty and the generational guilt that is permitted through our blood and enforced by society. If the government wants to help end poverty crisis amongst females and the LGBTQIA+ communities, they should be aware of the stories that all women and young girls have to go through. There are only few groups that raise women up to acknowledge their period/ma'i as a gift. People of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders have their own stories even about the concept of "periods" alone; most of the time it's a joke. Even though history shows how it's been made fun of, it is not okay to make fun of a girl/woman for simply being a woman! We are who we are and we bare the ability to give new life of generations beyond us. This has been an uphill battle of feminine rights to be respected, supported/helped, viewed as regular/normal people. This can be a start of an amendment towards all people with periods across not only communities, but throughout all the Islands of Hawai'i. Let's change the perspective of ma'i and periods throughout the state by choosing to support uterus' because it begins with "u" and ends with "us".

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:25:29 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Full support HB2177

Mahalo

Tamara Paltin

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 8:54:21 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a public health professional, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2177, 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.

Having worked in local public health for over 15 years, I have witnessed how improving access to health products beyond clinic settings can vastly improve community health. Both global and national research attests to the importance of providing low-threshold access to menstrual products. For example, refer to Rawat, et al (2023) at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10318639/#Sec1title>.

A 2023 survey of University of Hawai‘i students by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University found 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai‘i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 10:46:32 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trajan Satta-Ellis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Testimony on House Bill No. 2177

RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

Thursday, February 7, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

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

My name is Kayla Kamisato and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of **HB2177** 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.

Passing HB2177 would benefit those who experience “period poverty,” particularly members of low-income households and individuals who identify as nonbinary or transgender. I currently volunteer at a local mental health clinic here in Honolulu called Spill the Tea Cafe. Our work directly addresses the unique needs of pre-teens, teens, LGBTQIA+, and neurodivergent keiki by providing a supportive environment for their healing and growth. At our clinic, we try our best to provide period products at all times. As we cater to adolescents, we see the importance of providing them with these necessities so that they are present, comfortable, able to confidently build relationships and take part in everyday activities. Likewise, this is pertinent to students and adults who attend college campuses. They should not have to experience limitations as far as their ability to fully participate in their education or learning.

The cost of menstrual products is another alarming issue. According to [Pandia Health](#), a doctor founded and doctor led women’s health service, if a menstruating individual were to use one tampon every six hours, this equals four tampons being used every day. That would equal to 20 tampons for every five-day menstrual cycle, totaling to 9,120 tampons in their life. A box of 36 tampons is estimated to cost \$7, meaning that one can spend up to \$1,733.33 in their lifetime. But as we know, things are far more expensive here in Hawai‘i. The price of a box of 36 tampons at Safeway can cost up to \$12.29, at Walgreens, \$11.49, and at CVS stores, \$10.29. Supplying menstrual products can help to eliminate the stress of being able to afford boxes of pads, tampons, or wipes. 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 submit testimony in strong support of HB2177!

Kayla Kamisato (she/her)

Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:50:15 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 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 HB2177. This is an important step towards menstrual equity for members of our UH community who cannot afford to pay for period products. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:52:36 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lisa Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2177, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University found 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lee

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:52:55 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasper Bang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying as a member of the medical community in strong support of HB2177, which requires the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students.

As a nurse, I have seen the effects of period poverty. The physiological effects such as shame, but also physical health effects. Having to use a tampon for more than the recommended 4 hours, because otherwise you don't have enough, can lead to infection or even Toxic Shock Syndrome. This syndrome can cause *death*.

A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University found 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, **three times the national average**. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, **twice the national average**.

This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. Please, please support our students by supporting this bill.

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

Jasper Bang

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 8:10:44 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

February 5, 2024

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.

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. A more recent 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University showed that 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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

February 5, 2024

HB2177 - Relating to Menstrual Equity

Dear Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

I am writing to express my heartfelt **support** for House Bill 2177, which addresses the critical issue of menstrual equity by requiring the University of Hawai'i to provide free menstrual products to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers. As a mother of five menstruating individuals, three of whom are currently attending college in Hawaii, this legislation resonates deeply with me and is an essential step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

The provision of free menstrual products is not only a matter of convenience but also a fundamental issue of equity. The statistics speak volumes about the prevalence of period poverty among college students, with 43% experiencing it in the past year—three times the national average. Moreover, one in five students faces period poverty on a monthly basis, which is twice the national average. These alarming figures underscore the urgent need for action to address this pervasive issue affecting our students.

I am particularly concerned about the academic and mental health implications highlighted in the data. Among students experiencing period poverty, 81% reported academic disruptions, and 31% experienced depressive symptoms. It is evident that the lack of access to menstrual products is not only a financial burden but also a significant barrier to the overall well-being and success of students. As a parent, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of creating an environment where our children can focus on their education without the added stress of menstrual product affordability.

Furthermore, it is disheartening to learn that students facing period poverty are more likely to endure food and/or housing insecurity. This intersectionality of challenges compounds the already daunting task of pursuing higher education. **By passing HB2177**, we can take a crucial step towards mitigating some of these hardships, demonstrating our commitment to supporting the holistic well-being of our students.

In conclusion, I urge the House Committee on Higher Education to support and advance HB2177, recognizing the impact it will have on the lives of countless students in our state. By providing free menstrual products, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all, ensuring that no student is held back by the barriers of period poverty.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Texeira

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:12:48 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:18:23 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerestin Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2177, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University found 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:02:25 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ha Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:50:08 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Litt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members

House Committee of Higher Education & Technology

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024

TIME: 2:00PM

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2177

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

My name is Hannah Litt, and I am testifying as an individual. I am the Director and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse at the University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC) Health Center. I am proud to say that UHMC responded rapidly to the Senate Resolution on menstrual inequity that passed last summer, SR23. At this time, our campus has free menstrual supplies in all women's and gender-neutral bathrooms.

As part of a University-wide committee that is working on responding to SR23, I can testify that passing HB2177 will provide further impetus to enact these measures on other UH campuses.

Numerous global and nationwide studies have established the impact of period poverty (lack of access to menstrual supplies, facilities, or education) on important educational issues such as class attendance, and even graduation rates. A 2023 survey found that period poverty impacted UH students at three times the national average. This survey also found that Native Hawaiians experienced the highest prevalence with 51% experiencing period poverty in the past year.

Additional published research has established that access to menstrual products is an issue of gender inequity.

I can contribute with my testimony the concerns that were brought up early in UHMC's program roll-out conversation, and that persist on other campuses – interfering with their ability to fully launch their programs to date. Some of these questions may be surprising from the perspective of a person who menstruates. Many campus decision-makers do not have this perspective.

Stated Concerns:

- If we provide free menstrual supplies, they will start plugging the toilets and cause plumbing damage.
- If not flushed, the free menstrual supplies will be thrown in the trash and the maintenance staff will be at risk from bloodborne pathogens. Do they need Hep B shots?
- Men will be confused/offended if these products are in gender-neutral or men's bathrooms
- Products will be stolen if provided for free.
- Who will pay for this program? How will the maintenance department be compensated for the additional work?

Responses:

- People have been using and disposing of menstrual products whether provided for free or not. If not currently a problem, it will not become a problem.
- Menstrual supplies disposed of in garbage cans are not a biohazard.
- Men have not been bothered by the presence of free menstrual supplies at UHMC so far. Most are aware of gender equity issues.
- Product stealing has not been an issue at UHMC. Also, Ma'i Movement offers a month's supply of free menstrual products that can be sent to a person's home or picked up at the Health Center and this service is advertised in the bathrooms. Note: "free" toilet paper has been routinely offered in bathrooms for a long time and is rarely stolen. It is also not considered a special privilege, but of convenience and provides a sense of preparedness and security. The goal with free menstrual products is similar.
- The question of what department will pay is a persistent issue on many campuses. If the legislature were to provide ongoing funding to accompany this requirement, it would assure ongoing and long-term compliance.

It has been established that period poverty/menstrual inequity is an easily modifiable factor that will help address financial and gender inequities at a relatively small cost. As with all new programs, there will be conflicting perspectives and these tend to be emphasized when there are also conflicting financial interests. I hope that by providing behind-the-scenes information on the concerns that have emerged, I will help the House Committee of Higher Education & Technology craft HB2177 to remove remaining areas of ambiguity and uncertainty about responsible parties for supervision, maintenance, and funding of these programs. May I suggest a slight increase to whatever funding currently supports toilet paper and paper towels in University bathrooms?

Assigning specific departmental responsibilities and providing funding would make the largest impact in rapidly enacting the bill. I am available if your committee has any questions.

Thank you for supporting the rights of menstruating persons and addressing inequity in higher education in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Hannah Litt, MS, APRN, CNM

Director, UHMC Health Center

310 W. Kaahumanu Ave.

Kahului, HI 96732

808-984-3593

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:40:27 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The success of student advocates to ensure an end to period poverty in HODOE schools has been the most inspirational youth activism in my time in Hawaii. We should extend the same protection to UH students as well and ensure all of Hawaii's young learners don't experience period poverty as a barrier to their education.

With aloha,

David Ball

Waiālae-Kahala

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 12:47:23 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Witcover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. Having access to products is key to a woman's ability to move freely in society and without fear of "accidents" and embarrassment. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:18:35 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystine Ann Cabrera	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

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

My name is Krystine Cabrera, and I'm here to express my strong support for HB 2177, which would require the University of Hawai'i to provide free menstrual products to all students on any of the University of Hawai'i campuses, including the community colleges.

As a graduate student, I have struggled to afford and obtain appropriate menstrual products. I have even resorted to using toilet paper as a substitute. To fight period poverty, I have undertaken projects focused on menstrual equity. In August 2022, I received a \$500 grant from the Pad Project, which allowed me to distribute 2,376 menstrual pads in the East-West Center Residence Halls. Although useful, this initiative is limited in scope and does not provide a sustainable solution.

During the Fall of 2022, I hosted two film nights focused on period poverty and had fruitful discussions with students regarding their struggles with affording menstrual products in the community. I learned that many students have difficulty affording necessities like menstrual products while balancing the costs of living and studying. Some even skip class due to their menstrual cycle. This is unacceptable. Access to menstrual products is a basic need for all menstruating students and should not be a financial burden.

The lack of access to menstrual products can also lead to health risks, which is why it's crucial to make these products available in a sustainable way. In February 2023, I received a \$5,000 grant, which allowed me to purchase various menstrual products to be placed in each female and gender-neutral restroom of our residence halls. While this initiative was well-utilized, it's not sustainable because I cannot apply for grants every year to cover these expenses. Therefore, having menstrual products readily available across all college campuses would make a significant difference.

In conclusion, I urge you to support HB 2177, which can make a tangible difference in the lives of menstruating individuals who lack access to menstrual products on college campuses.

Thank you for your time.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:43:34 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Airabella Molina	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my strong support of HB2177, which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any UH campus, including the community colleges and education centers. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. Access to menstrual hygiene products is a fundamental aspect of a menstruator’s health and well-being, and making these products freely available to students is a step toward promoting equality, removing barriers to education, and fostering a supportive learning environment.

As a member of the community, the University Coordinator at Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i, a recent graduate of the The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, an alumni at Kap‘iolani Community College and Windward Community College, a victim of period poverty, I believe that ensuring students have access to free period products is essential for several reasons:

Promoting Health and Well-being:

Menstrual hygiene is a crucial aspect of maintaining good health for individuals who menstruate. By providing free period products, this will help students maintain proper hygiene, reduce the risk of infections, and support their overall well-being.

Reducing Economic Barriers:

Many students face financial challenges, and the cost of period products can be a burden for those already struggling to make ends meet. By providing free access to these essential items, it eliminates an additional economic barrier, allowing students to focus on their education without worrying about the cost of menstrual hygiene products.

Fostering Equality and Inclusivity:

Access to period products should not be a privilege but a basic right. Providing free menstrual products contributes to a more inclusive and equitable educational environment, ensuring that all students, regardless of their economic background, can fully participate in academic and extracurricular activities without fear of stigma or embarrassment.

Improving Attendance and Academic Performance:

Lack of access to period products can lead to missed classes, decreased participation, and overall negative impacts on academic performance. I've personally encountered the struggles of period poverty on numerous occasions, but one instance particularly stands out where I confronted this issue in a starkly tangible way. As my period unexpectedly began at school, I soon realized I didn't have the necessary products on me, and that they were not available to me anywhere closeby. In a desperate attempt to manage the situation, I had to resort to makeshift pads using only toilet paper, desperately hoping it would suffice for the day. Regrettably, it didn't, and I found myself bleeding through my pants. Filled with embarrassment, this resulted in my early departure from school. This challenging day underscored the difficulties of lacking access to period products, significantly increasing my awareness of the urgent need to address period poverty and advocate for improved accessibility to menstrual hygiene products.

By ensuring that students have access to free period products, it creates an environment that supports consistent attendance and allows students to focus on their studies.

In conclusion, I urge the State Legislature of Hawaii to support and prioritize the provision of free period products to students throughout the University of Hawaii system. This initiative aligns with principles of health, equality, and inclusivity, creating a positive impact on the lives of countless students striving to achieve their educational goals.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that the State Legislature of Hawaii will take decisive action to ensure that the University of Hawaii becomes a leader in promoting menstrual equity and supporting the well-being of its student body.

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

Airabella Molina

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 2:52:13 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Peahi-Ching	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

HB2177: Relating to Menstrual Equity.

Date: Wednesday, 02/07/2024

Time: 2:00pm

IN SUPPORT

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Kona Peahi-Ching and I am a current candidate for graduation with my Master of Social Work degree at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Currently, I am a full-time supervisor working for a corporate retailer and interning at Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE). I am testifying in favor of HB2177, relating to menstrual equity.

HB2177 is a bill that was proposed to the State of Hawai‘i Legislature by a local group known as Ma‘i Movement, whose mission is to create accessibility for all individuals of menstruation age to period products. I was first exposed to this organization while working for Victoria’s Secret – Ala Moana. Our staff coordinated donation drives in partnership with Ma‘i Movement where community members may purchase or donate menstrual products and drop them off at our store location for the organization. In my undergraduate career, I continued my work advocating for menstrual equity with Ma‘i Movement and taking my education further about relatable topics like feminism, women’s rights, and more. Ma‘i Movement was even the foundation for one of my final projects which proposed we address a current need within Hawai‘i communities and steps to remedy this issue.

In 2022, Ma‘i Movement introduced SB2821 also relating to feminine equity, specifically providing free menstrual products within State of Hawai‘i public school campuses. The testimonies offered by clients shared how their confidence and self-identity increased because of the education and support these females received through the Ma‘i Movement. May 2022, State of Hawai‘i Legislature passed SB2821 into law, manifesting a dream into reality for the Ma‘i Movement. HB2177 (Companion Bill: SB2433), if passed, would extend their services into the University of Hawai‘i education system by offering free menstrual products on all community colleges and education centers. We cannot assume that all individuals capable of menstruation are properly educated to use menstruation products. Therefore, having this bill passed into law

offers free products for use, could increase awareness about menstruation, and create potential opportunities for education.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my support of HB2177 (Companion Bill: SB2433) to be passed into law for the 2024 Legislative Session of Hawai‘i. This bill proposes great outcomes and if approved, will be a success much like SB2821 of the 2022 Legislative Session.

Kona Peahi-Ching

BSW, MSW Candidate | Spring 2024

University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

Cell: (808) 570-6362 | Email: spc808@hawaii.edu

To honorable Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and the Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill HB2177, which mandates the University of Hawai'i to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students across its campuses, including community colleges and education centers. This bill represents a significant step forward in ensuring educational equity, promoting health and hygiene, and supporting the well-being of all students.

Menstrual health is a fundamental aspect of health and wellness, yet access to menstrual products remains a challenge for many students, affecting their ability to participate fully in educational opportunities. By providing menstrual products at no cost, this bill directly addresses a critical need, ensuring that all students have access to the essential resources they need to manage their health and continue their education without interruption.

The provision of free menstrual products is not only a matter of health and hygiene but also one of dignity and equity. Menstrual products are a necessity, not a luxury. However, the cost of these products can be prohibitive for students, particularly those facing financial hardships. This bill acknowledges that access to menstrual products is a right, not a privilege, and takes a significant step towards eliminating the "period poverty" that affects many students.

Furthermore, this bill has the potential to improve academic outcomes by reducing absenteeism and distractions caused by inadequate menstrual hygiene management. Students should not have to miss class or compromise their academic performance due to a lack of access to menstrual products. By ensuring that these products are freely available, we are supporting students' ability to participate fully in their education.

In conclusion, Bill HB2177 is a vital piece of legislation that addresses an often-overlooked need. It reflects a commitment to the health, dignity, and academic success of all students at the University of Hawai'i. I urge you to support this bill and help make menstrual products accessible to all students, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Ikaika Vares-Young

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 4:47:45 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Kidd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 5:33:42 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Dorado Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a woman and the mother of two young women, I strongly support this measure. Period poverty is a very real thing on and off college campuses. I wish I could fully explain why I support this bill without getting graphic. I hope that you will try to imagine how difficult it can be for women who, even if we can afford period products, have found ourselves without in moments of needs. It happens ALL THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES until we hit menopause. Not a single woman I know has not had an embarrassing and/or uncomfortable experience in this area of our lives. Please, please support this important piece of legislation. I will continue to donate period products to colleges, but it should not be necessary. Please help UH step up!

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 5:50:38 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Mak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I'm testifying in very strong support of HB2177 to provide free menstrual products free of charge to all students on any Univeristy of Hawaii campus including community colleges. I am a firm believer in ending period poverty and this bill will help ensure that mentruating people can focus on their education. Our UH students experience period poverty at higher than average rates when compared to national averages. We know how high the cost of living and education is in the state of Hawaii. Let's support our students! Mahalo for reading my testimony.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 5:58:11 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felicidy Phimmasone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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 am currently a student attending the UH Mānoa campus studying public health and I hope to see the HB2177 bill passed, as it will address the social and structural inequities I witness on campus every day regarding access to period products. In a 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty every month, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:42:51 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marisol Ko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai‘i students by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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.

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.

- A [2023 survey](#) of University of Hawai‘i students conducted by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University to understand their lived experiences regarding accessibility of menstrual products and its impacts found that:

- 43% of menstruating students experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average
- One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average

- Among students experiencing period poverty, 81% experienced academic disruptions and 31% experienced depressive symptoms
- Students experiencing period poverty were more likely to face food and/or housing insecurity

- [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.

- 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.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:24:47 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael EKM Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:34:23 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauralee Dice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

All students should have equal access to menstrual products without stigma or shame. This could also improve academic focus and success and be one less burden to financially struggling students.

Mahalo,

Lauralee Dice

1479 Thurston Ave #201

Honolulu, HI 96822

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 11:33:57 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Ng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a student at University of Hawai'i, I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I will be graduating soon so while I will not be able to receive the benefits of this initiative, I wish that these basic resources were available during my few years here. Please make this campus a more affordable place.

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

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:32:04 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I believe this bill is an important step to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

As a menstruator and former UH student, I would greatly appreciate the provision of free menstrual products free of charge to all students. Knowing that such supplies are available would make the difference in dealing with periods when on campus.

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

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:57:29 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua O Eleili Kelsi Pinto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2177 for UH to provide free menstrual product in their bathrooms.

being a graduate of UH that was the first time I was managing and budgeting my own money. Investing in my education was the most important thing and every little penny had to be stacked to attend. What a financial relief that would of been for when my monthly cycle came. I was covered living in the dorms. It such an emotional time going to college. This small yet large act of having my university take care me in this way would have meant so much.

please help to end periods poverty.

mahalo for this time to share an issues that we can eliminate in our lifetime.

ke aloha no

pua o Eleili pinto

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 11:13:07 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr Jhumka Gupta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am a public health professor at George Mason University's College of Public Health and I have published extensively on the mental health impacts of period poverty among US-based college students.

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. In my research with University of Hawai'i students in collaboration with Ma'i Movement Hawai'i, 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. This is a fantastic opportunity to invest in the well-being of students.

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

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 11:45:40 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madeleine Longoria Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2177, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University found that 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. 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-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:22:53 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Kwan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jane Kwan, and I was born and raised in Honolulu. I am currently a senior attending the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am testifying in strong support of HB2177 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 strongly support this because I believe the lack of access to period products is a fundamental equity concern that can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health. Period products should be considered a basic need akin to toilet paper and provided by the University of Hawai'i.

For students, experiencing period poverty can be detrimental to their education. In a recent survey of University of Hawai'i students conducted by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University, about one in five students who have faced period poverty in the past year have experienced it on a monthly basis. This is twice the national average. Student participants have also reported academic disruptions and depression as a result of it. Having free menstrual products in the restrooms would undoubtedly greatly alleviate these problems.

I work at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Women's Center, where a stock of period products (supplied by donations) are available for students in need of it. Since the start of the Spring 2024 semester (about one month), already 60 products have been distributed. This highlights the need for more accessible period products for students on campus. In my personal experience, I unexpectedly got my period right before a final exam (which was worth a significant portion of my overall grade), and I did not have any pads with me. I questioned the front desk of the university library, a very public place, and was told that they did not stock supplies in any of their bathrooms (actually there are a few 25 cent machines, but I was not informed of this). Thankfully, I knew my workplace had pads available, so I was able to get what I needed and make it to my final exam on time. If not for the Women's Center, taking that exam would have been a very uncomfortable experience and would likely have impacted my performance. However, my experience is nothing in comparison to those who struggle with access to period products on a regular basis, which is why this bill is so important. It is the university's responsibility to care for the well-being of their students and do their utmost to support their educational journey.

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

Jane Kwan

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:25:23 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleialoha Lum-Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2177, 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 have been working in higher education for almost 20 years now and I have seen firsthand how powerful a post-secondary education is to uplift individuals, families, and communities. I have also seen the struggle of students who have to choose between basic needs and paying for college. The gap between haves and have nots was especially highlighted during the pandemic and in the last four years, the demand for basic needs skyrocketed across the campuses. Unfortunately, the longstanding practice of “not talking about it” has created a stigma surrounding menstruation and as a result period products are not considered a basic need. It is imperative that we categorize period products at the same level as toilet paper and other hygiene products.

The data demonstrates the impact of period poverty on education. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai‘i students by Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai‘i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment. By providing students with a much needed resource, they can better focus on their studies and successfully obtain a college education. The ripple effect will positively impact their families, community, and the entire state.

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

Kaleialoha Lum-Ho

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 12:27:22 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Blair Finlayson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of **HB2177**, 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. A 2023 survey of University of Hawai'i students by Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and George Mason University 43% of menstruating students in the University of Hawai'i system experienced period poverty in the past year, three times the national average. One in five students experienced period poverty on a monthly basis, twice the national average. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

As someone who regularly menstruates every month having free access to period products would give me so much peace of mind so I never have to worry if I remembered to bring products or not.

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

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 2:24:44 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB 2177 which requires the University of Hawaii to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on all campuses, including community colleges and education centers.

It may be important to ensure funds for this requirement of free products on campus and it may also be important for UH to examine the condition of the areas (bathrooms for example) in various facilities when deciding in which places they may offer them.

Again, I SUPPORT this bill.

HB-2177

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 3:34:52 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/7/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GLENISS AKAMINE	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha

Mahalo for continuing to consider menstrual equity and period poverty and what this really means. I continue to support this because I 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 continue to know that pads AND tampons should be available like toilet paper. I also know that there is a need. Since last year's testimony, there was a little grassroots effort at my current place of employment supported by the Ma'i Movement placing (2) dispensers in (2) different bathrooms and in (6) different offices; this has resulted in the use and distribution of over 1200 menstrual products. The dispensers in the two bathrooms require weekly refills while the dispensers in offices do not require frequent refilling. In short, we need dispensers or containers that provide both pads and tampons in bathrooms.

I support HB2177 because as a community we are adjusting and processing what it means to address period poverty and menstrual equity, this will be an important guide to help institutions continue to take responsibility to address menstrual equity providing pads and tampons just like any other basic consumable provided in bathrooms.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill. It is my hope that this year all Representatives will support Menstrual Equity.