



January 30, 2019

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of OR, we respectfully request your support for House Bill 2515.

It is difficult to understand any rationale that forces incarcerated women and female youth offenders in custody to pay for feminine hygiene products, whether they be sanitary napkins or tampons. These are not luxury items or something a woman can decline to use.

This is a public health issue. The most basic of health regimens require that women need to be able to access and use feminine hygiene products on a regular basis. Failure to use them can lead to infections and other health-related risks.¹

This is also an issue of basic fairness. Europe recognizes unlimited access to menstrual products by incarcerated women is a basic right²

It is also entirely inappropriate to supply tampons to those can afford it, but leave sanitary napkins to those who can't.

While menstruation is a normal bodily function, many women feel shame and embarrassment about it. Failing to provide adequate and no cost access to sanitary napkins and tampons is dehumanizing. That is not what our criminal justice system should stand for.

Respectfully,

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¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4488331/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20889173>