



April 1, 2019

Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, 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 3020.

It is challenging to understand how we are at a time and place where menstrual products aren't distributed at no cost to for least 50 percent of 7th to 12th grade students. These are not luxury items or something a young woman can decline to use. Just as toilet paper and paper towels are seen as necessities, so are menstrual products.

It is often the case that women cannot predict the onset of menstruation and without sufficient access, they may need to leave school in order to obtain menstrual products. Young women should not have to choose between attending or leaving school just because they are menstruating. It is also likely that the burden of this choice falls more heavily by those who face economically fragile living situations.

This is a public health issue. The most basic of health regimens require that young 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

While menstruation is a normal bodily function, many girls and women feel shame and embarrassment about it. The fact that menstrual products aren't available in our schools underscores the message that this natural function needs to be hidden. There is a social stigma attached to menstruation that clearly continues.

Failing to provide adequate and no cost access to menstrual products for grades 7 – 12 is dehumanizing to the girls and young women of Oregon.

Respectfully,

Trish Garner
State Public Policy Chair, AAUW of OR
Member, National AAUW Public Policy Committee
503-407-2341
garner37@mac.com

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