

# HB0208 MENSTRUAL EQUITY IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## What is period poverty?

Period poverty is the inability to access menstrual hygiene products. This and the corresponding issue of period stigma are barriers to education for many Maryland students.

## Did you know?

- In 2019, 43.2% of Maryland public school students enrolled for free or reduced-price meals, indicating that their families struggled to afford basic necessities. Many are students of menstruating age.
- Average age of menarche (first menstruation) is 12; today, anywhere from 30% - 50% of girls are getting their period before this age. Hispanic and African American girls menstruate before their white counterparts, on average and, generally, the age of menarche is continuing to decline.
- Access to menstrual hygiene products are a serious barrier to students' education and disproportionately impacts students of color from low-income families.
- Maryland passed a menstrual equity bill in 2017 for public school students experiencing housing instability, but the products are available only in school nurse offices, where distance can create problems as well as little awareness of the law.
- New York, Illinois, California, and New Hampshire have passed legislature requiring public schools to provide menstrual hygiene products in school bathrooms.

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## It is time for Maryland to do the same! What you need to know:

- HB0208 has been introduced into the 2020 Maryland General Assembly to require that elementary and secondary public schools provide size-appropriate maxi pads and tampons, free to students, in at least two restrooms per building by October 2020, and all restrooms by 2024.
- A social media campaign has been launched leading up to the House Ways & Means Committee hearing on January 30th to encourage students to share their support for this issue and contact their legislators and school board members about the importance in passing this measure into law.
- A coalition, the **Menstrual Equity Alliance for Maryland Students**, is forming to guide and support the campaign. Please join us!
- HB0208 lead bill sponsor is Delegate Kirill Reznik (D39).

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Menstrual Equity  
Alliance for  
Maryland Students

