



Meng Introduces Whole-Of-Government Approach To Combat Period Poverty And Improve Access To Menstrual Products



WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), announced that she reintroduced her Menstrual Equity for All Act, a whole-of-government approach to eradicate period poverty and achieve menstrual equity. The Congresswoman announced the measure following Menstrual Hygiene Day which was observed this past weekend.

Menstrual Hygiene Day is a global advocacy day to promote good menstrual health and hygiene. Meng first introduced the legislation in 2017.

“Menstruation is a natural part of life for roughly half the world’s population,” **said Congresswoman Meng.** “Access to period products is a health care right and in turn, a human right. My Menstrual Equity for All Act is a comprehensive approach to end period poverty and ensure that all menstruators have access to safe and affordable period products. The bill expands access to menstrual products for individuals across a range of populations such as in schools and universities, workplaces, and correctional and detention facilities, and through existing federal programs like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Social Services Block Grants. We cannot continue letting women, girls, and menstruators miss out on educational and career opportunities simply because they cannot afford period products.”

Specifically, Meng’s Menstrual Equity for All Act would:

- Give states the option to use federal grant funds to provide **students** in **elementary** and **secondary schools** with free menstrual products;
- Incentivize **institutions of higher education** to create pilot programs that provide free menstrual products to students;
- Ensure **incarcerated individuals** and **detainees** in federal (including immigration detention centers), state, and local facilities have access to free menstrual products, including requiring guidance on distribution;



- Allow **homeless assistance providers** to use grant funds that cover shelter necessities (such as blankets and toothbrushes) to also use those funds to purchase menstrual products;
- Require **Medicaid** to cover the cost of menstrual products;
- Direct large employers (with 100 or more employees) to provide free menstrual products for their employees **in the workplace**;
- Require all **public federal buildings** to provide free menstrual products in the restrooms;
- Provide states and localities with funds through the **Social Services Block Grant** program to support free menstrual products programs;
- Prohibit **sales tax** on period products; and
- Create a pilot program within the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** program to help families in need access menstrual products.

Meng has spearheaded numerous efforts to improve access to menstrual products and promote menstrual health. At the beginning of May, Congresswoman Meng led 18 of her colleagues in a **resolution** declaring May National Menstrual Health Awareness Month. The resolution recognizes the impact that the stigmatization of menstruation has on the lives of women, girls and people who menstruate.

"Period supplies are essential for all people who menstruate so that they can participate fully in daily life – attending work, school and other everyday events," **said Joanne Goldblum, CEO of the Alliance for Period Supplies.** "The Menstrual Equity for All Act ensures equitable access to period supplies so that millions of people can work, learn and participate in our society knowing they have the material basic necessities to thrive. Thanks to Congresswoman Meng, the Menstrual Equity for All Act is a comprehensive solution to a basic public health problem and is long overdue."

"PERIOD. is honored to support Congresswoman Grace Meng's Menstrual Equity of All Act of 2023," **said Michela Bedard, Executive Director of PERIOD.** "The introduction of this vital piece of legislation is a crucial step towards ensuring that the crisis of period poverty can be solved in our lifetime. The State of The Period 2021 study shows that nearly 1 in 4 teens in the United States struggle to access period products. By addressing this fundamental issue, we will ensure that people who menstruate are able to fully engage in work and school by accessing and affording the menstrual products they require. We can make period products as accessible as toilet paper, helping millions of students, mothers, and families."

"The Menstrual Equity for All Act helps to ensure the right to menstruate with dignity by increasing the affordability and availability of necessary and vital products like pads and tampons," **said Amber Garcia, Executive Director of Women's Voices for the Earth.** "We applaud Congresswoman Grace Meng for continuing to champion this issue in Congress, and for being such a strong and powerful voice for menstrual equity."



A 2019 study found that among low-income women in a major U.S. city, nearly half had to choose between buying food and spending money on menstrual products. Around one in four teens have struggled to afford period products, and 1 in 10 college students report experiencing period poverty in the past year.

Meng's legislation is endorsed by: PERIOD, Alliance for Period Supplies, Girls Inc., Kimberly-Clark, Proctor and Gamble, Center for Baby and Adult Hygiene (BAHP), MomsRising, Women's Voices of the Earth (WVE), ISSA-the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association, Women in Training, Thurman Perry Foundation, The National Health Law Program, Mujeres and Menstruators United (MAMU), The Flow Initiative, Moms Helping Moms Foundation, Metropolitan Detroit Diaper Bank, Diaper Bank of North Carolina, Central Florida Diaper Bank, The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, Project MKC, Renewing Dignity Inc., Access Period, Free Flow NM Inc., Keeping Families Covered, Women4Women Tempe Inc., Every Bottom Covered Inc., The Period Pantry Project, Allied Foundation, Red Lined, The Kwek Society, Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank, Shakopee Community Assistance (SCA), Alliance for Period Supplies of SWFL, Sylvias Sisters, Expecting Relief, Putting Prayers to Action, Project Distributing Dignity, The Period Collective, Providing for Women, Mitzvah Circle Foundation, Junior League of New Orleans, Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank, 901 Period, Greater Philadelphia Diaper Bank/Mighty Writers, San Diego Food Bank, and Amenity Aid.

A copy of the bill can be viewed [here](#).