



Legislators OK bill for free menstrual products in New Mexico schools

BY DAN MCKAY / JOURNAL STAFF WRITER



SANTA FE — Lawmakers granted final approval late Tuesday to legislation that would require free tampons and similar products in school bathrooms — a victory for Albuquerque Academy students who served as expert witnesses.

The proposal, House Bill 134, won approval in the Senate on a 27-13 vote.

Sen. Leo Jaramillo, an Española Democrat who presented the bill Tuesday, said the availability of menstrual products would help families throughout New Mexico.

The bill calls for sanitary pads and tampons to be available in each women’s or gender-neutral bathroom in public middle and high schools. At least one male restroom would also have to have the products.

Jaramillo said the presence of menstrual products in a male restroom would allow boys to take the products home for a sister, mom or aunt. They’d also be helpful, he said, for transboys.

“These products are important for both school and home,” Jaramillo said.

All 13 dissenting votes came from Republican senators. They questioned the need for tampons or pads in male restrooms.

Sen. David Gallegos, R-Eunice, said he feared the proposal was a step toward having “unified” bathrooms.

Tuesday’s vote sends the bill to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

It was a victory for Albuquerque Academy seniors Noor Ali, Marly Fisher, Sophia Liem and Mireya Macías. They’ve been a frequent presence at the Roundhouse this session seeking support for the measure, even during late-night debates.

“Every hall I looked down, they were there,” said Sen. George Muñoz, a Gallup Democrat who credited the students with winning his vote.



The students sat on the Senate floor – serving as expert witnesses to help Jaramillo answer questions – as the Senate debated the bill about 9:30 p.m.

The House sponsors of the bill include Democratic Reps. Christine Trujillo of Albuquerque, Kristina Ortez of Taos and Tara Lujan and Linda Serrato, both of Santa Fe.

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