



# Gov. Murphy Announces Free Menstrual Products in Public Schools

Trenton, NJ – On Monday, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a landmark bill (S-1221/A-1349) aimed at fighting ‘period poverty’ by requiring New Jersey school districts to provide free menstrual products in all public schools teaching grades six through twelve.

The legislation is a response to a 2021 study, which found that almost one in four teenagers in the United States, particularly students of color and those from low-income families, struggle to afford menstrual products. Lack of access to these essential hygiene products has been shown to hinder learning and cause unnecessary infections, leading to chronic reproductive health issues.

The new law mandates that applicable schools must furnish menstrual products in at least half of all their female and gender-neutral bathrooms. Any associated costs for supplying these products will be covered by the State.

Governor Murphy expressed his commitment to the mental and physical well-being of New Jersey students, stating that the new law is an integral part of ongoing efforts to foster success and promote equity within the state. The legislation also mandates the New Jersey Departments of Education and Health to periodically evaluate the provision of these products to ensure they are meeting the needs of menstruating students, with the potential for expanding access to grades below six if required.

This initiative follows the Murphy Administration’s previous efforts to enhance menstrual health, such as providing free menstrual hygiene products to female inmates in the state correctional system in 2019, and the creation of a website for information on menstrual health-related issues.





The bill, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz, Assemblywoman Gabriela Mosquera, Senator Vin Gopal, and Assemblywomen Carol Murphy and Angela McKnight, is hailed as a monumental step towards achieving menstrual equity in New Jersey's educational system.

Key officials, including Acting Commissioner of Education Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan and Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston, praised the initiative, emphasizing that it not only supports health and well-being but also helps reduce inequalities and erase potential stigma.

As a direct response to the alarming national study showing that the lack of access to period products has led many teens to miss classes, this new policy is seen as an essential move to address the challenges around menstruation and create a more just and inclusive educational experience.

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