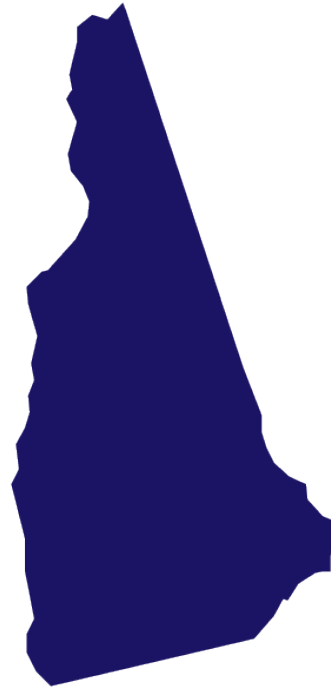




# Free period products now required in New Hampshire prisons, jails



**CONCORD, N.H. —**

Talking about periods may be taboo for some, but it's a reality that half the population deals with each month, including people behind bars. "It's very important to get these things when you need them, you know, comes down to human dignity, like we need these things," said Ophelia Burnett with American Friends Service Committee.

Ophelia Burnett knows firsthand how hard it is to live behind bars, especially when you get your period. "It is very degrading already being a woman incarcerated," Burnett said. She spent four years in New Hampshire's prison for women, and she said in the past, getting your period has meant choosing between calling your family or saving the money to buy tampons and pads.

"To have to beg and you know, things like that, for it," Burnett said. "It's just, you know, inhumane. That's why she spoke out in support of a new bill to make sure having access to those products in prisons is never an issue again.

Gov. Chris Sununu signed House Bill 421 earlier this month, ensuring that period products are now free to anyone with a monthly cycle in state prisons and county jails. "Everyone who menstruates, I should say, needs to have access to the right product for their cycle," said Rep. Ellen Read, D-Newmarket. "Period poverty is a thing, and it's a thing nationwide."

Rep. Read sponsored the bill. She said some inmates are shunned if they can't get products while others have gotten physically sick. "There were women who had verifiably gotten infections," Read said.



Some state facilities, like the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for women, have provided products in the past, and have done a "good job," Read said; however, on the county level, there were delays getting products or not enough supplies available.

She and Ophelia hope that this bill just be the first step in addressing a long list of intersectional issues that face women and other populations across the state. "People go in and we get forgotten about, and like I said, we're still there, we're still humans, we still have feelings," Burnett said.

This was an overwhelming bipartisan bill and it's already now in effect.

<https://www.wmur.com/article/free-period-products-required-nh-prisons-jails/44803648>