



In pink tops and white pants, women celebrate free period products becoming available in Utah's state buildings

By: Emily Anderson



One year after the Utah Legislature passed a bill to put free period products in all public K-12 school bathrooms, Gov. Spencer Cox announced that he is adding state buildings to the list of places stocked with the supplies.

Approximately 1,698 women's and family restrooms in executive branch buildings will be outfitted with pads and tampons – nearly 1,000 of which are used by members of the public who access those facilities. As he announced the measure at the Capitol, Cox hailed Thursday as “a wonderful day.”

“This will ensure that that the women on Team Utah, and all women in the state, have the resources they need and the knowledge that they are valued,” Cox said in front of a crowd of supporters and public officials, all dressed in pink.

Cox was joined by Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, who served as a state senator before being elected to the position. She was greeted with laughs as she told attendees the products “would've come in handy” for her.

“I cannot tell you how many votes I missed having to run around, and my poor interns — especially the male ones — who had to go find tampons for me,” Henderson said, adding, “I symbolically wore my pink, yes, but also my white pants.”

The proclamation came after more than a year of advocacy by The Policy Project, which through its initiative Utah Period Project, has expanded access to menstrual products in buildings statewide. After an effort in which the organization enlisted more than 500 high school students to help call on lawmakers to allocate funds for the hygiene items, this year is the first that pads and tampons have been in every girls' and all-gender school bathroom in Utah.

“Believe it or not, menstruation is something that historically was not considered a topic for the halls of the Capitol, despite periods being a biological occurrence that is necessary in the process of giving life to all of us,” said Emily Bell McCormick, a founder of The Policy Project.



It launched the initiative at a rally in November 2021. Cox included in his proposed budget an allocation for period products to be placed in all public K-12 school bathrooms, and the Legislature approved the measure in HB162. Bell McCormick said more than 337,000 students have been impacted by the policy.

Salt Lake City has offered free period products in its restrooms since 2019, and last summer expanded that program to men's restrooms so that transgender people have access to them, too.

A spokesperson for the governor's office said the period products will only be in women's and family restrooms in state buildings.

The Policy Project has worked with Sandy City, the Utah Department of Corrections, the Utah System of Higher Education, homeless shelters and local companies to expand access to period products in other restrooms.

The organization is now working to build teen centers – a place where students living in unstable situations can go to get food, clothes, shower or do laundry, but also access a counselor – at every high school in Utah. The Utah Legislature's Executive Appropriations Committee set aside \$15 million for the initiative – lower than the \$20 million Cox had in his proposed budget, and the \$28 million The Policy Project asked for.

The governor said he hopes the momentum of providing period products continues to build. "I feel so fortunate to live in a state where we could lead out in this way in showing the rest of the nation that there's a better way to do things," Cox said.

Henderson added that she's grateful for the organization's efforts, "so that we can have access for all women and girls in our state to be exactly where they want to be and where they need to be, which includes classrooms, it includes boardrooms, it includes committee rooms and it includes legislative chambers."

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/in-pink-tops-and-white-pants-women-celebrate-free-period-products-becoming-available-in-utahs-state-buildings/ar-AA18c0PO>