



Bill could require TN high schools to provide free period products



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WKRN) — Tennessee lawmakers introduced a bipartisan bill aimed at increasing access to feminine hygiene products at public high schools.

The Menstrual Hygiene Products Accessibility Act (HB2207), sponsored by Rep. Elaine Davis (R – Knoxville), would require each local education agency and public charter school to provide menstrual products at no cost to the students in all women’s bathrooms, locker rooms and with the school nurse.

“I think it’s a huge boost to confidence to know that you can go to school and you’re going to have all the supplies that you need,” said Lacey Gero, director of government relations for the National Diaper Bank Network. “When you go to school, you know you’re going to have soap when you go to the bathroom, you’re going to have paper towels, and you’re going to have toilet paper, and for women and girls, period products are essential, basic needs.”

According to the Alliance for Period Supplies, 25 states and Washington D.C. have passed legislation to help students who menstruate get free period products while in school. Currently in Tennessee, menstrual products are taxed as “non-essential goods.”

“When people experience period poverty, they often have to use proxy items such as socks or toilet paper to substitute for period products,” Gero said. “Knowing that you have that product in your school restroom, you’re going to be able to actually focus a lot better in school and really have the competence to be a student and have equal access to your education as your male counterparts.”

The proposed legislation would require 20% of the state’s sales tax revenue from feminine hygiene products to be deposited into a special account that’s then distributed to eligible schools to purchase those items for their campuses.

“It’s really a great use of revenue that’s being collected on exactly what we’re talking about to go back to the school systems,” Gero said. “I think a lot of states are surprised at how low the cost to actually do this is because oftentimes, you think that this is going to be very expensive.”

The House K-12 Education Subcommittee voted in favor of HB2207 on Tuesday. The bill still has several more hurdles to clear in the House and Senate to become law.

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