Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on Public Schools – Provision of Feminine Hygiene Products
Attorney's and Expert Witness Fees and Related Costs
(HB 133)
Feb. 7, 2019

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. For nearly 104 years, our mission has been to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 133 – Public Schools – Provision of Feminine Hygiene Products. This bill requires each county board of education to ensure that all public schools serving students in grades 6 through 12 provide, at no charge to students, feminine hygiene products, defined as tampons or pads used during the menstrual cycle, within school restrooms.

Maryland PTA supports increasing the availability of feminine hygiene products to help secure a healthy, safe, and equitable school environment for all students, a priority that HB 133 directly addresses by requiring that all public schools with middle and high school students provide access to free feminine hygiene products in their restrooms, thus following in the footsteps of California, Illinois, and New York as well as the countries of Scotland, Wales, and Kenya. This bill complements Maryland PTAs position supporting equitable access to quality, affordable health care for all children and youth, in large part as a response to the most recent Confidence & Puberty Survey conducted by the feminine hygiene products company Always®, finding that nearly 1 in 5 U.S. girls ages 16-24 have either left school early or missed school entirely as a result of not having access to menstrual products.

The provision of feminine hygiene products in public schools helps alleviate a lack of access to essential health care that, according to research conducted by the food bank network, Feeding America, disparately impacts low-income girls. Not only does this bill help address the issue of equity but improved access to basic health care needs to be addressed within Maryland public schools in order for girls of all backgrounds to have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

For the reasons stated above, Maryland PTA supports House Bill 133 and recommends a favorable report.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

Latisha Corey
Latisha Corey, President
Maryland Parent Teacher Association
president@mdpta.org