



Providing Feminine Hygiene Products in Schools, Shelters and Prisons

Background: Readily accessible feminine hygiene products such as tampons and sanitary pads are a necessity for healthy, stress-free periods. In 2016, New York City¹ became the first in the United States to provide free menstrual hygiene products in public schools, shelters and prisons and many college campuses are following suit.

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors encourages the Legislature to consider the following information when drafting legislation about providing feminine hygiene products in public schools, shelters and prisons.

- Menstrual hygiene products are analogous to toilet paper in restrooms; they are necessary to meet everyday health and sanitation standards.
- Many students opt to stay home during their periods because they do not have menstrual hygiene products. Having these products available in public schools will increase school attendance and allow students to focus on their studies.
- Many low-income individuals are not able to afford enough menstrual hygiene products to last a whole period. Being forced to only use one sanitary pad or tampon for the whole day increases the risk of toxic shock syndrome and other serious health risks.
- Feminine hygiene products are often the last items donated to shelters yet are some of the most needed items.
- Most prisons do not provide enough menstrual hygiene products to last an entire period. Furthermore, the inmates earn too little to afford extra products at the commissary. Providing more menstrual hygiene products will allow inmates to work towards rehabilitation and release.²

¹ <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/new-york-city-mayor-bill-de-blasio-signs-tampons-free-law_us_5787bc57e4b08608d3336b27>

² <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/12/prisons-menstrual-pads-humiliate-women-violate-rights>>