



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

Senator Chipman, Representative Tipping-Spitz, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, I am Whitney Parrish, Director of Policy and Program for the Maine Women's Lobby. The Maine Women's Lobby is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide organization devoted to raising the economic, social, and political status of Maine's 678,000 women and girls.

I'm writing to express our support for LD 286, *An Act To Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Feminine Hygiene Products*.

Maine's tax code delineates between taxable items and non-taxable necessities like groceries and medical supplies. One of the policy principles underlying this differentiation is that there are some purchases that people must make to stay healthy, and we should not be using those necessary expenditures as opportunities for raising revenue. We believe that same principle should apply to the taxation of menstrual supplies.

Women, trans, and gender non-conforming people have little to no control over their menstrual cycles. Without sufficient access to clean and hygienic menstrual products, people who menstruate face health consequences, like infections. Lack of access to menstrual products also makes it impossible to go about our lives—going to work, attending school or participating in public life. Menstrual products are not a luxury item by any means. They are a medically necessary staple for all people who menstruate.

We know that many low-income people already struggle with the costs of other basic necessities, like food and shelter, which makes purchasing tampons or other menstrual products extremely challenging. A year's supply of menstrual products could cost up to \$70 a year or more, and these expenses are not eligible to purchase with SNAP benefits. Any policy that would increase access to critical hygiene products for low income women and people who menstruate would go a long way. We hope you will vote ought to pass.

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