



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1136**



Introduced by **Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) defines Period Poverty as the struggle many low-income women and girls face while trying to afford menstrual products. The term also refers to the increased economic vulnerability women and girls face due the financial burden posed by menstrual supplies.

According to the UNFPA, difficulty affording menstrual products can cause girls to stay home from school and work, with lasting consequences on their education and economic opportunities. Poor access to safe means of managing menstrual hygiene and lack of medication to treat menstruation-related disorders or pain also limit job opportunities for women and girls. They may refrain from taking certain jobs, or they may be forced to forgo working hours and wages.

The World Bank reports that new research in Argentina, Brazil, India, South Africa, and the Philippines highlights the high prevalence of menstruation-related challenges girls face related to education. In the Philippines, 8% of girls reported missing school because of menstruation.

While according to UNICEF, period poverty can lead to physical health problems. Without access to pads or tampons, girls may resort to using dirty rags or leaves during their periods. This can cause infections and other medical problems.

Currently, there are countries/states that provide free menstrual products to address period poverty. Among them are New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, some states in the United States of America, Canada, and Australia.

Among the universally agreed human rights that can be undermined by women's and girls' treatment during menstruation are the right to health, right to education, right to work, right to non-discrimination and gender equality, and right to water and sanitation.

This bill seeks to provide for free menstrual products in public schools and public health centers. Addressing period poverty will promote menstrual hygiene management and will help girls and women who cannot afford menstrual sanitation products to reach their full potential.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
Representative
Lone District, Calamba City



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AN ACT
PROMOTING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE BY PROVIDING FOR FREE MENSTRUAL
PRODUCTS TO STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC HEALTH CENTERS
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Free Menstrual Products Act.”

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to provide equal access to education and work. It is also the policy of the State to promote gender equality and the right to health by ensuring that girls and women have access to proper menstrual hygiene.

Sec. 3. Free Menstrual Products in Public Schools. – The Department of Education through the public primary and secondary schools nationwide shall provide free menstrual products to female students who may need it.

Sec. 4. Free Menstrual Products in Public Health Centers. – The Department of Health, in coordination with the Local Government Units shall provide for free menstrual products in every Barangay Health Center for distribution to women and girls who cannot afford it.

Sec. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, DepEd, and DILG shall jointly issue implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

Sec. 6. Separability Clause. – If any provision, or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec. 7. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 8. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,