

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City**

**Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 5179**



**Introduced by
AKBAYAN REPRESENTATIVES DADAH KIRAM ISMULA, JOSE MANUEL TADEO
"CHEL" I. DIOKNO, PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA, and DINAGAT ISLANDS
REPRESENTATIVE KAKA J. BAG-AO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every month, more than two billion people around the world menstruate. Menstruation or period, it is a natural and healthy process, yet millions of women and girls cannot afford menstrual products or access to safe water and sanitation to manage their menstrual health and hygiene.

This challenge, known as period poverty, affects their health, education, and overall well-being. Period poverty refers to the inability to afford and access menstrual products, sanitation and hygiene facilities and education and awareness to manage menstrual health. In the Philippines, this is a reality for many.¹

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), as of 2020, there were approximately 27.85 million women aged 15 to 49 in the reproductive age range, representing 51.9% of the total female household population of 53.65 million.² Meanwhile, UNICEF estimates that in 2021, the number of adolescent girls and women aged 10 to 49 in the Philippines reached at least 34 million.³

This means that at least 34 million women used period products every month. Period products vary, including tampons, reusable menstrual cups, and sanitary pads or napkins. In the Philippines, menstrual pads or napkins remain the most popular choice because of their availability and familiarity. Meanwhile, tampons and menstrual cups are less commonly used due to limited availability and accessibility.

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/period-poverty-why-millions-of-girls-and-women-cannot-afford-their-periods>

² <https://psa.gov.ph/content/age-and-sex-distribution-philippine-population-2020-census-population-and-housing>

³ <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/13941/file/Philippines%20-%20Country%20Profile.pdf>

The average menstrual cycle lasts between 3 to 7 days. Health experts suggest changing pads every 4 to 8 hours, which means an average of 4 pads per day. For a typical 5-day cycle, this amounts to 20 pads per cycle. At an average cost of seven (7) pesos per pad, the monthly expense is approximately one hundred forty (140) pesos.

For many, this cost is manageable. But for students, low-income families, and marginalized communities, it creates a barrier to dignity, health, and education. Lack of access to safe menstrual products can lead to missed school days, increased health risks, and lower self-esteem and stigma.

This bill seeks to provide free period products in public schools and health care providers, recognizing that access to period products is not a privilege, but a matter of basic human rights.

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



DADAH KIRAM ISMULA
Akbayan Representative



JOSE MANUEL TADEO
"CHEL" I. DIOKNO
Akbayan Representative



PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA
Akbayan Representative



KAKA J. BAG-AO
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**AN ACT REQUIRING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS TO
MAKE PERIOD PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE, 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 PERIOD PRODUCTS
ACT."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes the role of women in
nation-building and shall therefore protect and promote their empowerment. The State
also recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and promotes and protects
their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. In the pursuit of this
policy, the State shall ensure that girls and women have access to proper menstrual
health and hygiene. This includes providing safe, affordable, and accessible menstrual
products and education.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

- a. **Health Care Providers** - refers to community-based health facilities, including
but not limited to barangay health centers, rural health units (RHUs), and other

facilities operated by local government units that provide essential primary health care services.

- a. **Period Products** – refers to sanitary napkins, tampons, reusable pads, menstrual cups, and other menstrual hygiene items.
- a. **Public Schools** - refers to state-funded institutions providing elementary, secondary, and tertiary education, including programs under the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Alternative Learning System (ALS), and other government-supported institutions for learning and skills training.

SEC. 4. Free Period Products in Public Schools and Health Care Providers. -

The DOH, in coordination with DepEd, SUCs, and LGUs, shall ensure the provision of free period products to all persons, in all public schools, learning and skills training institutions, and health care providers.

Access to period products is guaranteed to all persons regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex characteristics.

SEC. 5. Implementation. - The DOH, in coordination with DepEd, SUCs, and LGUs, shall oversee the implementation of this Act in all public schools, learning and skills training institutions, and health care providers, respectively.

SEC. 6. Procurement and Distribution of Period Products. - The DOH shall procure, distribute to public schools, learning and skills training institutions, and health care providers, and monitor the usage of period products supplies nationwide.

Supply and budget allotments shall be based on, among others:

- a. Number of students;
- b. Number of women of menstruating age.

SEC. 7. Sustainability and Environmental Considerations. - The DOH shall promote the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly menstrual products, such as reusable pads and menstrual cups, where feasible. Public education campaigns shall include information on proper disposal and the environmental impact of menstrual waste.

SEC. 8. Emergency Stockpiles. - Public schools, learning and skills training institutions, and health care providers shall maintain emergency stockpiles of period products to ensure availability during natural disasters, armed conflict, or other emergencies.

SEC. 9. *Monitoring and Report.* - The DOH, in coordination with DepEd, SUCs, and LGUs shall submit an annual report to Congress detailing the implementation of this Act. The report shall include data on distribution, usage, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improvement.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - This Act shall be implemented initially within the framework of the Department of Health's budget for the fiscal year in which it is enacted into law. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the Department of Health.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with DepEd, DBM, and other relevant government agencies and civil society organizations, must issue the rules and regulations to implement its provisions.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other parts or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect immediately after fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,