

# Self-Identity and Health Committee

**Initiative: To encourage a healthy sense of self through education and access to period products.**

Young girls pay a hefty price when period supplies are not free - it's a matter of economic justice and public health: Stigma, poverty, and a lack of access negatively impact education and development. We want young girls to feel empowered, safe, and confident about having their period.

## Research/Justification

According to Period, Inc., as of November 7, 2019, 33 US States still have a sales tax on period products considering them non-essential items. However, one in four women currently struggle to afford period products due to a lack of income ([www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org/](http://www.allianceforperiodsupplies.org/)).

Nearly one in five girls in the U.S. have left school early, or missed school entirely because they didn't have access to menstrual products. (Always Confidence and Puberty Study, Nov. 2017; based on females 16-24 years old; 2016 U.S. census.). Aside from missing class and school, students are often forced to use menstrual items for long stretches of time, which puts them at higher risk for cervical cancer, toxic shock syndrome, and other health issues resulting from product overuse, research shows. ((UNICEF) Menstrual Hygiene Key to Keeping Girls in School : <http://unicef.in/Story/122/Menstrual-Hygiene-Key-to-Keeping-Girls-in-School>)

The Self-Identity and Health Committee met with state Representatives Brigid Kelly and Catherine Ingram to discuss advocacy efforts related to the repeal of the Pink Tax in Ohio, and also presented on the issue of ending period poverty to the Cincinnati Public Schools Student Achievement Committee on October 3, 2019. Members of the Commission offered research and personal stories regarding period poverty during the presentation. The Commission requested that CPS pilot a program during the 2020-2021 school year offering free period supplies in schools serving grades 6 and up.

## Recommendations

- Schools within Hamilton County should institute a system to provide free menstrual supplies to students in grades six and up.
- Programs and legislation should continue to be advocated for and enacted to achieve menstrual equity.

Respectfully Submitted,

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