

Emily Phuong Tran

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RE: Support HB 3294

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and other members of the committee,

My name is Emily Phuong Tran. I am a junior at Tualatin High School. Recently, I organized with the Tigard-Tualatin Student Union and the PERIOD chapters at Tigard and Tualatin to pass a policy amendment that provides period products in all girls and gender-neutral bathrooms in middle and high schools in the Tigard-Tualatin School District. I support HB 3294 because providing period products makes us one step closer to achieving equitable educational opportunities for all students.

What should be considered a natural, normal process has become a barrier to our success. When students don't have period products, they leave classes and opt out of activities, missing precious hours of education only because they menstruate. A study by SheThinx and PERIOD found four out of five girls have either missed class or know someone who has missed class due to lack of a period product. These are not one or two-time instances in which students need period products. A one-year pilot program at Grant High School found the average number of products used by the menstruating population is 26 units. That's 26 times students might've had to leave class because they did not have period products. That's also 26 times providing period products allowed students to continue instruction.

The most heavily impacted students are our students of lower socio-economic status and our students of color. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program does not cover period products so families in poverty are left choosing between buying period products and other necessities like food. Communities of color experience higher rates of poverty meaning students of color are more likely to be unable to afford period products. Thus, the lack of access to period products is an inequitable educational barrier that most impacts students of lower socioeconomic standing and historically oppressed minority students.

In researching towards a policy amendment, we calculated the cost of dispensers and the annual cost of consumables to show full impacts of the proposal. However, at the end of the day, providing period products was not dependent on budget. Period products are as essential as toilet paper and soap. Hygiene products are not products districts remove when the budget is low. The benefits of providing period products to our students far outweighs its cost.

More and more policymakers see the damaging effect lack of period products have on students' education. In recent years, California, Illinois and New York all passed policies to provide period products in schools. Oregon students deserve access to period products because we deserve access to the classroom.

Thank you.

Emily Phuong Tran