

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 61. I am a 4<sup>th</sup> year medical student at The Ohio State University, and I am excited to be entering the practice of family medicine – and am excited to stand in support of this legislation.

Others have discussed many of the reasons why it would be beneficial for Ohio's women and families to remove the tax on feminine hygiene products. From a medical standpoint, this is also a good idea.

As a future family physician, I am particularly interested in the *prevention* of illness and disability. Patient education is critical in that regard, but often times other factors can outweigh education. For example: Most women have seen warnings about Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), a rapid-onset infection that affects many organs in the body and can even lead to death. One factor that increases the risk for TSS is leaving tampons in for longer than 6-8 hours. Most women know this, but if finances limit one's abilities to purchase tampons, then that recommended time limit may go out the window. We see this ALL THE TIME with all sorts of medications and health products. When money is tight, people have to choose between different needs, and there can be terrible consequences.

We know that the best way to address a health issue is to prevent it, and you have the opportunity to play a role in prevention today. By removing the tax on tampons, not only are you endorsing the truth that they are not a luxury item, but you are helping Ohio residents live as their healthiest selves. For decades, tampons have afforded those who can pay for them the opportunity to work, play, and learn to their full potential – it is in your hands to make that reality more accessible to all.