

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 have lived in Ohio for most of my life and am excited to stand in support of this legislation. I am a soon-to-be physician with a passion for women's health.

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.

Every tampon user has seen warnings about Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), a rapid-onset infection that affects many organs in the body and can even lead to death. According to the Ohio Department of Health Infectious Disease Surveillance Report, 35 percent of those with streptococcal toxic shock syndrome died from their infection. As we all know, the best way to address a health issue is to prevent it, and you have the opportunity to play a role in prevention today.

One factor that increases the risk of TSS is leaving tampons in for over the 6-8 hour recommendation. If an individual is concerned about finances or is trying to make their regular menstrual cycle less expensive, they may leave tampons in for longer, increasing their risk of contracting TSS. 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.

I'm thrilled that you are discussing removing this tax on essential feminine hygiene products. 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.