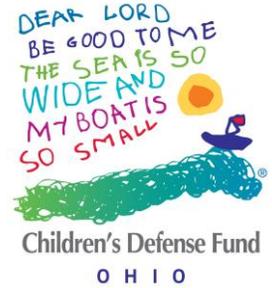


**House Bill 61
Proponent Testimony**

**Ashon McKenzie
Policy Director
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
House Ways and Means Committee – October 10, 2017**



Chairman Schaffer and Members of the Committee:

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio's Leave No Child Behind[®] mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF-Ohio provides a strong, effective and independent voice for all of Ohio's children, who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. CDF-Ohio educates the state about the needs of children and encourages preventative investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown. The Children's Defense Fund began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization. The Ohio Office was established in 1981.

CDF-Ohio supports House Bill 61, which would eliminate the sales tax on tampons and other feminine sanitary products.

These products are necessities, not luxuries, and should not be taxed. Sanitary products are vital for the health, well-being, and full participation of women and girls across the globe. The United Nations and Human Rights Watch, for example, have both linked menstrual hygiene to human rights.¹

The cost-burden of these products disproportionately impacts low-income girls and young women. Studies show that when these hygiene products are not accessible, girls will often miss school and, in many instances, use the products past their recommended use, which puts girls' health at risk.

Several other states, including Florida, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, have already eliminated this tax, thus, removing barriers for women and girls.

As advocates for low-income youth, we strongly urge the Committee to pass House Bill 61.

¹ *Menstrual Hygiene a Human Rights Issue: A Simple Guide to Ending Discrimination, Abuse*, <https://www.hrw.org/print/308124>, August 27, 2017; Jessica Valenti, *The Case for Free Tampons*, Theguardian.com, August 11, 2014.