

**Testimony of Nitasha Mehta, Head of Vendor Marketing at Boxed
Wholesale, on HB 61
House Ways and Means Committee
October 10, 2017**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 61, which will exempt from sales and use tax the sale of tampons and other hygiene products related to menstruation.

Hi, my name is Nitasha Mehta, and I lead vendor marketing at Boxed.com. If you haven't heard of Boxed yet, we're an online and mobile version of the wholesale shopping club, but with free shipping and no membership fees. We help our customers save time and money, and we'll even deliver bulk size essentials to Ohio within two days.

Equality is something that is very important to me and all of us at Boxed, and that is the reason I decided to take a stand and help Boxed.com launch our RethinkPink initiative late last year. We took a hard look at some of the products offered on Boxed and realized that many female products cost significantly more than their male equivalents on a per ounce or unit basis. We also discovered that in over 35 states women are still charged sales tax or "luxury tax" on tampons and pads. These are everyday essentials that every woman depends on, and there is absolutely nothing luxurious about menstruation. Canada repealed tampon tax nationally in 2015, and unfortunately the US is far behind.

When I brought up this issue to our CEO, Chieh Huang, he was just as shocked as I was to learn about these pricing discrepancies. He himself has a young daughter, and he didn't understand why she would have to pay more on essential items throughout her lifetime than her male friends would have to. And so with the entire company's support, Boxed decided to take a stand and lower our prices on women's products that had a significant cost variance vs. their male equivalents, as well as reduce our prices on tampons and pads in an effort to offset the sales tax--even if this meant taking a hit on margin. Boxed customers still pay sales tax in states that tax feminine hygiene products, but we've lowered the list price on these items so the final price is equal to what women would have paid if this unfair tax did not exist in the first place.

The one year anniversary of launching this initiative was actually this past Friday, and since we launched, we've had millions of unique page views to our RethinkPink landing page, have had over 20,000 signups for our RethinkPink initiative, and have passed hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of savings back to our customers.

States like NY, Connecticut, and Illinois have already taken the initiative to repeal tampon tax last year, and hopefully it's just a matter of time before the entire nation follows suit and

removes this discriminatory and unnecessary tax on a basic biological function. We hope Ohio will be next.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important piece of legislation. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.