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Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Rogers and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for House Bill 19, which will exempt menstrual hygiene products from the state sales and use tax.

My name is Jean Hodge and I am the Program Manager at Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank. For almost a year, we have researched the need for women's access to period supplies as a basic need and a medical necessity. (According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, FDA: Food and Drug Administration, Menstrual Tampons and Pads are medical devices that are subject to (501(k)S) submission.) Due to the cost of menstrual products, women and girls living in poverty, who can't afford to buy tampons and pads, are unable to participate fully in their lives leading to job loss, missed school days and a general lack of dignity.

1 in 4 women have struggled in the past year to purchase period supplies due to lack of income. Imagine if you couldn't go to work because you were menstruating and had no products to care for yourself. This scenario could result in job loss, furthering your existence in a life of poverty. Add to this, you can't afford supplies for your school age daughter, who also has a monthly menstrual cycle, so she misses up to five days of school each month. This results in a poor education and continues the cycle of poverty for the next generation.

When women can't afford menstrual products, they resort to using toilet paper, clothing and even diapers that their baby has outgrown. As a first step, eliminating the sales tax on menstrual products will put a little money back in her pocket each month that she can use to purchase other taxed items in our state. Please think of your daughter, wife, sister or mother when making the choice to vote for this bill or not. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important piece of legislation.