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Ohio House of Representatives, Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of committee:

Thank you for the opportunity once again to speak on behalf of the over 1,900 women who visit Dayton Right to Life's Stork's Nest Baby Pantry each year. We would like to express our support for House Bill 19 which would exempt tampons and other feminine hygiene products associated with menstruation from sales tax. Menstruation, according to 2015 Huffington Post article, affects women on average from 13 years of age to 51 for again on average 3-7 days a month. This adds up to over 2,200 days in our lifetime. The cost for tampons alone, this article documents, is over \$1,700 over the course of a lifetime.

Menstruation, unlike some other medical issues is not caused by reckless behavior or lifestyle choice. Females have to deal with this situation every month for close to 40 years, barring pregnancy interruptions. I would like to point that after the birth of a baby, personal hygiene products are definitely needed, and recommended by the hospital upon discharge. In fact, the FDA lists these items as medical devices. See <https://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ucm071781.htm#5>.

Additionally, these items, are not covered by government assistance programs.

We have heard many stories in our Pantry from our moms who have resorted to using paper towels from the fast food locations, etc to deal with this issue. This is incredibly unsanitary and can lead to vaginal infections, urinary tract infections, and other medical problems. The low-income moms we see also have the added burden of purchasing these items from local corner drug stores whose prices tend to be higher than the large-scale discount stores found in other areas.

This sales tax exemption would certainly alleviate a portion of the monthly financial burden of our families. But all women in Ohio, especially those living at poverty levels, should not be taxed on items they have to use and frankly, we prefer they use. These products are more necessary, then say breakfast cereal, yet we do not tax that.

For this reason, I urge the members of this committee to approve House Bill 19 and ease the burden of all women of Ohio, especially those with low-income struggles. Feminine hygiene products, like medicine, should not have to be rationed or sacrificed to "make ends meet." Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this important topic.

Respectfully submitted,

Margie Christie
Executive Director
Dayton Right to Life