

Proponent Testimony – Girl Scout Troop 45960

In support of HB 19

May 7, 2019

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Lipps, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 19. We are Girl Scout Troop 45960 from Fairfield, OH. We are grateful for the opportunity to share with you our story of improving access to feminine hygiene products in our school and why we think your support of House Bill 19, which will exempt feminine hygiene products from state sales and use tax, is important.

While some of us have not experienced our period yet, we understand the need for these products to be readily available. They are just as important as soap and water when it comes to our personal health. Our lives do not stop while we are on our periods and we feel that feminine products are a necessity to one's health, not a luxury item.

Our school rules state that we are not allowed to carry bags throughout the day, our uniforms do not have any or adequate pockets, and our lockers are within our homerooms. These rules caused undue stress to only the girls at our school, requiring us to sneak feminine products within our waistbands or sleeves, to take additional class time to go to nurse's office, or to get our product from our lockers in front of our classmates where we could be body shamed. All of this for something that is completely natural and experienced by all girls at some point.

Our Girl Scout troop installed feminine hygiene storage cabinets in the restrooms. This allows us easy access to our products without missing class time, without facing shame from others, and without additional stress and anxiety in our lives. It is reassuring to know that the products are where we need them, when we need them, which helps us feel more confident, comfortable, and engaged while at school.

As we learned more through Girl Scouts, we learned that there are girls and women throughout the world who do not have access to any feminine protection, including right here in Ohio. Without pads, tampons or menstrual cups, you ruin your clothes, you miss out on school or work, and pull back from society during that time - every month. Days of your life and ultimately years of your life would be put on hold. All because of the way you were made – a woman.

At the beginning of our efforts we stated that our project “may not change the entire world, but it will make a world of difference to a girl.” We have been able to make a difference to the girls at our school, but you now have the ability to make a world of difference to all of the girls and women of Ohio by supporting House Bill 19. Thank you. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.