



State Representative Latyna M. Humphrey (OH-02)

Sponsor Testimony

DATE

Good afternoon Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and all other members of the State and Local Government Committee. I am here today to talk about HB 30, a bill that would require correctional facilities in Ohio to supply feminine hygiene products.

I'm here today to talk about an issue that we don't usually talk about in settings such as this. We don't usually talk about bodily functions in this formal and elegant setting. But we need to talk about it. This issue has a profound effect on women's quality of life. It has a profound effect on women's dignity. In some cases it even has a profound effect on women's health.

Authorities in health care state that access to adequate feminine hygiene products is essential for women's health. The [World Bank](#) states that poor menstrual hygiene can pose serious health risks. The risks include reproductive and urinary tract infections which can result in future infertility and birth complications. The [Lancet](#) declared that menstrual health is a public health and human rights issue. The American Medical Association considers feminine hygiene products as medical necessities and [advocates](#) that incarcerated women be provided products free of charge and given the appropriate type and quantity.

As of this moment, there is no law, policy, or standard of care that requires jails and prisons in Ohio to provide feminine hygiene products to inmates. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction states that they provide these products to the female population at no cost and that they make the products available in discrete areas. There are many other facilities where access is not guaranteed. Some only have items for sale in the commissary. Some only provide a very limited range of products. Some only provide a certain number of products per inmate each month with no consideration given to the actual needs of an individual. Some charge for each product used. There are no guidelines on what a facility can charge for these products and some charge prices that are much higher than what you or I would pay if we bought the same product right now.

When a person is incarcerated, the authorities that run that facility are responsible for the health of the people they hold. Menstruation is a natural body function. It is an involuntary function that occurs on a regular basis. Caring for this bodily function is necessary for good health. It is vital that correctional facilities provide these necessary items to women in their care. I ask that you vote yes on HB 30. I am happy to answer any questions that members of the committee may have.

Along with providing products, the bill would also require the facilities to have a range of sizes, a written protocol in place and a sanitary procedure for disposing of products. Also, they can't deny feminine hygiene products or the use of showering or bathing facilities while experiencing menstruation, regardless of whether the inmates are separated from the general population for degree of charge or disciplinary reasons.

Questions for Rep

What to say about ODRC policy/cooperation

Possible questions from committee members

- Cost
- Who else/what states cover this?
 - Federal Bureau of Prisons memo
 - 2017 memo from US Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons
 - Requiring all female inmates in federal institutions be given unlimited access to a range of feminine hygiene products at no cost to the inmates
 - As of 2020, only 13 states and DC had laws on the books that required facilities to provide menstrual supplies free of charge to people in jails and prisons.