

Madam Chairwoman, Marilyn John, Vice Chair, Bill Dean; Ranking member of the committee, Sean Brennan; and all other members of the committee, my name is Michelle Grubbs and my jobs are: Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant, Behavior Technician, Clinical Tech and Certified Peer Recovery Supporter. I was incarcerated at Dayton Correctional Institution from 2014-2021. I am here to empower, educate and advocate for incarcerated women.

During my incarceration I was treated as less than human, and my feminine hygiene needs were not met. I received from 1 bag of generic "Julie maxi-pads", which contained only 16 pads. Due to the fact that I am a heavy bleeder, the amount provided was not sufficient enough for my cycle. I was an indigent inmate for some time, meaning I could not afford to buy needed products for my menstrual cycles. Therefore, I would bring some of my meals back to my cell, and trade them for Maxi pads from other inmates. Sometimes during my menstrual cycle, I used toilet paper as maxi-pads. When feminine hygiene products were available at Dayton Correctional Institution, the process was to ask Male Correctional Officers and Male Sergeants for the products. This experience caused me to feel embarrassed and ashamed. I experienced extreme cramping and lower back pain during my cycles. As an indigent inmate, I could not afford to purchase Ibuprofen and I was forced to lay in a prison cell enduring pain. This constant cycle increased my depression.

Also, the only way I had to dispose of used feminine hygiene products was to put them in a large trash can without a lid which was located next to the microwave area where others would prepare and cook their food. My experience from prison is not over because I still suffer from institutionalized behaviors. For example: depression, anxiety, PTSD, night terrors, panic attacks, low self-esteem, inability to feel that I am equal to others, and I struggle making decisions without approval from authority figures.

I support this bill because I personally know the struggle and I don't want any other women to have to endure the embarrassment, neglect, and pain I went through. I am certain this bill will impact women in a great manner and they will have the proper feminine hygiene products needed for a biological function. Thank you, committee, for hearing my testimony and I ask for your support for House Bill 30.

Thank you,

Michelle Grubbs