

## Testimony Supporting Ohio House Bill 29

Chairperson Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

My name is Ainslee Johnson-Brown, and I am honored to submit this testimony on behalf of Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity (URGE) in support of House Bill 29. URGE is dedicated to advocating for reproductive justice and gender equity, and we strongly support this crucial piece of legislation, ensuring access to free feminine hygiene products for incarcerated individuals in Ohio's correctional facilities.

Menstrual and feminine hygiene are fundamental and essential health needs. Lack of access to the necessary products forces menstruating individuals to resort to unhygienic alternatives—leading to infections, discomfort, and worse. Requiring the incarcerated to purchase these products at inflated commissary prices exacerbates financial inequities and undermines rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, a failure to provide menstrual products perpetuates cycles of neglect that increase the risk of complications related to pregnancy and reproductive health. As Ohio grapples with the devastating impacts of an ongoing maternal morbidity crisis, Ohio can take a meaningful step toward addressing systemic inequalities in reproductive healthcare and improving health outcomes for all incarcerated individuals.

This is not only a matter of dignity and public health but also a constitutional obligation. The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires that incarcerated individuals must be provided with adequate health and hygiene necessities. Ohio also has a clear obligation under its state constitution to provide for the health and well-being of those in its custody. Our state constitution—through its guarantees of equal protection, reproductive freedom, and humane treatment—reinforces the necessity of providing for healthcare needs related to feminine and menstrual hygiene. Access to menstrual products is a direct extension of Ohio's obligation to maintain humane conditions within its correctional facilities.

Ohio must uphold its duty to ensure that all in its custody are treated with humane and dignified conditions. I urge this committee to support House Bill 29 and to affirm Ohio's commitment to justice and equity. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further information as needed.

### Ainslee Johnson-Brown

Ohio Policy and Movement Building Director  
Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity