Madam Chairwoman Susan Manchester, Vice Chair Andrew Brenner, Ranking member of the committee, Casey Weinstein and all other members of the committee, my name is Dianira Garcia formerly known as formally known as inmate 78294. Today I stand before you a Wright State graduate with a degree in Journalism. And I hold a few other degrees as well in Business administration and computer science. I also am a motivational speaker through an organization called the *Four Friends*. I spent two years in the Ohio Reformatory for Women and three years at Dayton Correctional Institution where I was released in 2015.
My story is not an easy one by far. While in prison, I had severe issues with my menstrual cycle. I was told it was stress, and I would be fine. No tests were ever run even though I would bleed excessively for days upon days up to two months one time. When I would ask for help, I was denied pads. I was told to figure it out or buy it on commissary.

I was denied help to assess the situation.

I was denied any human decency.

I experienced this treatment for 2,190 days of my life. Yes, a long time to suffer so inhumanly. In our commissary, we only had one choice of tampons, and pads were not even sold. My bleeding was beyond a tampon as the one size was the smallest available. No matter how much I begged, pleaded, even cried for help, it was denied.

It was a NO for everything, concerning feminine hygiene care for any reason. About six months before I left, the bleeding was increasing to the point of unbelievably bad and painful periods and severe clotting. This was due to my mental health medicines being decreased to get me ready for release. If you look at the statistics on incarceration and mental health, they go hand in hand. I was told the prison staff would overmedicate us to indeed cut our periods off or cut them short. This would be one less cost to the state.

I entered prison with semi-good health and left with stage three uterine cancer. The most dehumanizing thing to me was being humiliated and made fun of by the officers when asking

for extra pads. This caused me to not further report my menstrual issues. I left prison with cancer that went undetected because they refused to acknowledge a problem with my periods.

It will never leave my mind the things women inside have to do to obtain pads—like selling their souls. And let's not leave out what male guards would do to us or how we had to do "favors" just to get extra pads. Yes, it happens, and it's real. I would sit in my cell most of the time because I would bleed so much and for so long that I would bleed through my clothes and would need to clean myself constantly. I feared being humiliated if I bled through my two or three state-issued outfits. I would have severe anxiety and depression during my cycle due to the embarrassment. I have been home for eight years now, and still to this very day, I suffer from the negligence on behalf of the ODRC and the one pack of 18 pads-a-month policy. I came home and would bleed out to the point of hospitalizations, endless emergency room runs, endless doctor appointments. Eventually, I found out about the cancer.

The only way to fix it was a hysterectomy that I could not get because I was pregnant with my youngest son. So after bleeding out several times while pregnant, I gave birth to my son and finally a doctor agreed to do the hysterectomy. Unfortunately, the hysterectomy was botched, and it almost cost me my life. I spent two out of five months of being hospitalized in critical care. In part because the ODRC wouldn't help me with my menstrual issues. Had they been more open and supportive of something that is natural, I wouldn't have lost so much of my health.

We need a bill to protect women from the ones who took oaths to serve and protect. I ask you today to support this bill for every woman who is incarcerated and denied products that they need.

Ladies, ask yourself can you survive on 18 pads a month? Gentlemen, do you know if your mothers, wives, or daughters could survive on 18 pads a month? They cannot. Why should my sisters inside have to suffer in such an inhumane way?

No woman bleeds the same or suffer from the same symptoms. Yet inside those walls or gates, they treat us like it's a crime to do something our bodies naturally do and to be ridiculed to the point of illnesses or cancer going undetected.

Thank you for supporting this bill and for your time and willingness to hear us out.