



The House Education Committee - Thursday, April 8, 2021

Testimony on S.115 the Miscellaneous Education Bill

Sec. 11. 16 V.S.A. § 1432 is added to read: § 1432. MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

(a) By enacting this statute, the General Assembly intends to ensure that all students attending a public school or an approved independent school have access to menstrual products at no cost and without having to request them.

(b)(1) A school district and an approved independent school shall make menstrual products available at no cost for each school within the district or under the jurisdiction of the board of the independent school in:

(A) a majority of gender-neutral bathrooms and bathrooms designated for female students that are generally used by students in any of grades five through 12; and

(B) the school nurse's office.

(2) The school district or independent school, in consultation with the school nurse who provides services to the school, shall determine which of the gender-neutral bathrooms and bathrooms designated for female students to stock with menstrual products and which brands to use.

(c) School districts and approved independent schools shall bear the cost of supplying menstrual products and may seek grants or partner with a nonprofit or community-based organization to fulfill this obligation.

The Vermont State School Nurses' Association(VSSNA) supports the bill to provide menstrual hygiene products in schools at no cost to students. We were pleased in the significant changes to the language since we testified before the Senate Education Committee on February 4, 2020.

We appreciate the language that includes the school nurse in local decisions and allows schools to determine which bathrooms to stock with menstrual products. This allows schools to take into consideration which bathroom facilities have plumbing to support accidental flushing of these items as well as which bathrooms are heavily used for community and evening events so that menstrual products can be reserved for student use.

We want to thank you for including language for these items to be stocked not only in bathrooms, but in the school nurse office as well.

We appreciate that the bill expanded the language to include students “grades 5 through 12,” however, we would like to reiterate that girls reach menarche as young as 8 years old and as late as 19 years old, which means there are 3rd and 4th graders who are not currently included under the protection of this bill, but who should also be included. As a means to normalize menarche, regardless of age of onset, perhaps the house would consider language that is age focused rather than grade focused. This would allow local decision makers the ability to ensure menstrual products are accessible to all menstruating students, regardless of grade.

Respectfully submitted,

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