



Youth Call for the Passage of S.53

An open letter from Vermont students to VT representatives calling for the passage of S.53

For Immediate Release [3/15/2021]

Iris Hsiang
Youth Organizing Coalition
(802)-578-4511
irisclairhsiang@gmail.com

Dear Representatives,

We, the undersigned Vermont students, wish to convey the urgency for the passage of S.53. Period poverty is real and pervasive, and it affects many Vermonters. You have the ability to help end that and provide the equal footing that all Vermonters who menstruate deserve.

Under current Vermont law, menstrual products are taxed at a rate of 6%. These products are not a luxury but indeed a human right. Our state's laws and pocketbooks must align with our priorities and values. To allow the tax on period products to continue is to conclude that those who menstruate in fact do not deserve the dignity and equality that comes with liberation. To allow the tax on the period products to continue is to be complicit in our oppression.

A closer look at our state's tax code presents a telling story about our priorities. When items such as garters, garter-belts, girdles, and hosiery, are tax-exempt, but necessities such as period products are not, it becomes glaringly obvious who is writing the laws and what their intent is for those who menstruate. When costumes and masks are tax-exempt but the products essential for our workforce participation and wellbeing are not, we know that we are not the priority.

In Vermont, 1 in 4 single mothers struggle to meet their needs, and a recent study showed that 1 in 5 teens struggled to afford and purchase menstrual supplies. These individuals are often the backbone of our communities and deserve better. We deserve better.

The lack of access to period products affects an individual's ability to maintain a job and in turn earn an income. If this state is as committed to equity as we say we are, we will pass S.53 and begin to spare these Vermonters the shame and humiliation that comes with a lack of period products.

Legislators in this state always talk about how they want young people to stay here. If you really mean that you will make Vermont a place where we no longer fear period poverty because our government believes that it is a luxury to have the care we need.

Please afford us the respect, dignity, and opportunity we deserve by passing s.53.
With urgency and insistence,

Iris Hsiang, Fatima Khan, Zenavia Wilcox, Tilly Krishna, Eva Frazier, Cole Glider, Sofia Smith, Sophia Clark, Gabe Groveman, Tokitierata Ambo, Maia George, Sabina Brochu, Olivia Miller, Wade Winter, Morgan Marckres, Merry Smith, Caitlin Balon, Livia Ball, Lily Merchant, Rachel Yandow, Elizabeth Messier, Maria Hurn, Izzy Hopkins, Ella Newman, Ines Horozovic, Elleleanor Beaulieu, Mia Phillips, Sydney Martin, Molly Ardren, Amelia Duffy, Alexandra Knight, Laura Shands, Lucy Renaud, Trenton Sisters, Hazel Fay, Paige Walker, Celia McClintock, Faith Ploof, Ella Skinner-Sloan, Olivia Toomey, Evalin Pachman, Emma Boudreaux, Ali Stevens, Hannah Gilbert, Madi Drew, Lisa Taki, Rachel Bartholf, Avi Bauer, Maddy Holcolmb, Jemma Brinker, Bryan House, Eliot Dy, Ellie Blackburn, Valentine Giesey, Claire Knowles, Emma Roberge, Endrina Biqkaj, Lucious Karki, Sarah Sciortino, Susannah Smith, Amalia Iskandarova

Youth Organizing Coalition website:

[Youthorganizingcoalition.wordpress.com](https://youthorganizingcoalition.wordpress.com)

Bill progress and resources:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/S.53>

Fiscal note on S.53:

https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Publications/Senate-Bills/c83a75ad91/GENERAL-353627-v1-S_24_Fiscal_Note.pdf

VT tax exempt items:

<https://tax.vermont.gov/exempt-items#clothing>

Vermont education fund information:

<https://tax.vermont.gov/sites/tax/files/documents/FS-1259.pdf>

