



Bill to address 'period poverty' in schools advances in Florida House and Senate

Health News Florida | By Rick Mayer

The measure promotes dispensing tampons and sanitary napkins on campuses for students at no charge.



Florida lawmakers in both chambers on Thursday unanimously approved a proposal to ensure the availability of menstrual hygiene products for students in public schools.

The bill (CS/HB 389) calls for tampons and sanitary napkins to be available for students at no charge. The products can be available in the school nurse's office, other health offices and restrooms, including wheelchair-accessible restrooms.

A 2021 report showed that period poverty – the inability to access menstrual hygiene products – was experienced by nearly one-fourth of all students and that lower-income students and students of color were more affected.

According to state Sen. Lauren Book, D-Plantation, one in four girls report missing school because they don't have period products.

"It's time to end period poverty in our schools because a period should only end a sentence, not an education," Book said.

The measure encourages school districts to partner with "nonprofit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, businesses and other organizations" to assist in supplying and maintaining the products.

Schools must inform students of the availability of the products.

Previous versions of the bill have been introduced three times and failed to advance.



If signed, the bill takes effect July 1.

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