



NJ Senate Passes Free Menstrual Product Bill for Public Schools

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NEW JERSEY — Just two weeks after taking a leap forward, a proposed New Jersey law that would require districts to provide free menstrual products such as tampons in public schools is on the move again.

On Monday, S-1221 passed a unanimous vote in the Senate. What would the bill do if it becomes law? According to one of its primary sponsors, Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz:

“The bill, S-1221, would require schools teaching grades six through 12 to provide menstrual products free of charge. Under the bill, they would have to be available in at least 50 percent of female and gender-neutral bathrooms. Any costs incurred by the school district as a result of the bill would be covered by the state.”

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee unanimously voted in its favor earlier this month.

A companion bill, A-1349, has been introduced in the state Assembly and referred to that chamber’s Women and Children Committee. That chamber will have to approve the bill in a full vote before it can proceed to the governor’s desk.

“No child should miss valuable class time due to lack of access to menstrual products,” Ruiz said. “This legislation will keep students in the classroom by making supplies readily available to those who need them.”

“We must continue to remove barriers that may affect educational spaces and create environments that are inclusive and free of embarrassment for all of our students,” Ruiz added. “This policy will bring us one step closer to that goal.”



Nationwide, the average woman spends about \$20 on feminine hygiene products per cycle, adding up to about \$18,000 over her lifetime, according to the National Organization of Women.

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the bill would lead to a \$4.7 million to \$13 million increase in state expenditures in the first full school year following enactment and a \$2.7 million to \$11 million increase in state expenditures in each subsequent year. The expenditures would first be incurred by school districts and then reimbursed by the state.

Based on data from the 2020-2021 school year, under the bill, approximately 1,383 schools across the state would be required to provide free feminine hygiene products in all school bathrooms. The total enrollment of students in grades 6 through 12 in these schools approximated 724,800, the OLS states.

Ruiz represents the state's 29th district, which includes the municipalities of Newark in Essex County, and East Newark and Harrison in Hudson County.

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State House, Trenton, NJ – December 5, 2022, John Marbach, Hospeco Brands Group, provides testimony to the NJ senate and budget appropriations committee regarding S-1221.