

NOW DEMANDS LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS MENSTRUAL INEQUITY

WHEREAS, menstruation is a natural biological function and approximately half of the population will have a period every month for decades of their lives; and

WHEREAS, access to menstrual products is a dignity and equity issue, but every day there are individuals who menstruate across the United States who are unable to access the menstrual products they need; and

WHEREAS, national surveys and research report that “one in four women and girls” struggles to secure enough period supplies to meet their needs each month due to a lack of income, known as period poverty; and

WHEREAS, national surveys also report that “one in five women and girls” misses work or school due to insufficient amount of period supplies; and

WHEREAS, local, state, and federal government policies cause or exacerbate inequitable access by imposing sales taxes on menstrual products, refusing to adequately provide products in prisons and jails, exempting menstrual products from public health benefits programs, and not making products uniformly available in public schools and homeless shelters; and

WHEREAS, job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic have disproportionately impacted women and further increased the number of individuals struggling with period poverty; and

WHEREAS, the National Organization for Women (NOW) recognizes that period poverty is a public health issue and that addressing period poverty can lead to improved health and economic outcomes for individuals who menstruate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW, its members, and local and state chapters work to ensure that ALL who menstruate have access to safe menstrual products — affordably, easily and with dignity — by supporting all efforts to reduce period poverty and eliminating period stigma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW call for federal, state and local legislation to:

- Eliminate the ‘tampon tax’ in states where sales tax or value-added tax is applied to menstrual products — or, conversely, exempt these products from sales tax by placing them in the category of necessity;
- Allow those receiving public assistance through programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) to use benefits to purchase menstrual products;
- Ensure that vulnerable populations have equitable access by requiring public schools, correctional facilities, and homeless shelters to provide menstrual products;
- Require that every menstrual product on the market disclose its ingredients conspicuously on the packaging; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that NOW endorse and advocate for the Menstrual Equity for All Act introduced by Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), which has additional measures such as Medicaid coverage of menstrual products, and require large employers and all public federal buildings to provide free menstrual products in restrooms in the same way as toilet paper and soap.