

The personal is political. Few realities better embody this rallying cry of the second-wave feminist movement than the global issue of period poverty.

I continue to contend with this fact as I engage in the discourse surrounding period poverty as a concern of personal and statewide significance. I support the recently introduced [Bill H. 3109](#) and [Bill H. 3302](#) as reasonable and promising means of addressing period poverty and inequity in South Carolina. I aim to highlight the benefits of exempting feminine hygiene products from sales taxation and requiring free period product provisions in public schools as detailed in the respective bills.

Removing the “Tampon Tax” ⇒ Bill H.3109

Bill H. 3109 - A bill to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by amending Section 12-36-2120, relating to sales tax exemptions, so as to provide a sales tax exemption for feminine hygiene products, diapers, and toilet paper.

Bill H. 3109 hinges on the premise that access to affordable menstrual care should never be dictated by the circumstances of one's income or socioeconomic standing. Crucial to this argument is a position that I hope you share: Menstrual care items are fundamental necessities, not taxable luxuries. By this measure, each woman and girl in South Carolina is entitled to the dignity of affordable, independent, safe, and effective period management without the imposition of taxation.

I confidently place my trust in this legislation despite criticisms of its inconsequentiality. I believe its provisions are essential to establishing a more egalitarian South Carolina that recognizes women's issues as issues of gravity and urgency. While I understand that not all social dilemmas are sufficient in earning the fiscal priority of the legislature and governor, I am imploring each to consider the extensive impacts of implementing Bill H.3109.

The matter of inaccessible, taxed menstrual care is a telling metric of how our government chooses to address systemic gender inequality in all spheres of life. I maintain that this bill has the capacity to revitalize social equity in education and the workforce. Inaccessible period care can prompt poor school or work attendance and necessitate medical attention as women resort to unsafe measures of managing their cycles. With tax-free care options, economically disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls may no longer feel helpless in the face of their menstrual periods. Instead, they may feel empowered and in control of the most intimate aspects of their physical health.

Free Period Products in ALL Public Schools ⇒ Bill H.3302

Bill H. 3302 - A bill to amend the South Carolina Code of Laws by adding Section 59-17-153 so as to provide Every public school shall maintain a supply of feminine hygiene products that female students may use free of charge, to provide this supply must be maintained in the office or the school nurse of the main office, and to define necessary terms.

Bill H. 3302 is a long-awaited proposal necessary to ensure that students who menstruate no longer feel overlooked or slighted by their institutions of learning. I attend a publicly-funded South Carolina school

that epitomizes period inequality. I have witnessed the anxiety and shame that routinely accompany students who manage their periods in an environment that is lacking in sensitivity to a fundamental biological function. Students cannot feel a sense of belonging in their classrooms when they don't have easy access to means of managing their health. Only schools that provide free and safe period products in their restrooms send the proper message to their students: "You are welcome here." This simple measure should not be subject to controversy. It should be viewed as a basic provision that can only enhance the climate of public schooling.

As is the case of any political entity, South Carolina only actualizes its potential when the interests of women and girls are not banished but welcomed to spaces of sincere consideration and legislative action. When our duly elected leaders represent the crucial needs of such long-disparaged groups, they demonstrate the power of their democratic offices to produce just and compassionate results. Therefore, I am asking you to join me in petitioning them to back Bills H. 3109 and 3302 and prioritize the crisis of period inequity.

If you agree with the positions expressed in this letter, please consider taking the following steps to become involved.

1. Sign [my petition](#) on [change.org](#) to ratify Bill H. 3109 and Bill H. 3302.
 - o Above all, I authored this petition as a Greenwood, SC student who has witnessed the stigma, vulnerability, misinformation, and inequity that has too often influenced menstrual health outcomes. I hope you'll share the petition and its message along with your lived experiences related to this deep-seated issue. You may discover an extraordinary power in your own story.
2. Contact those who have the power to ratify and enforce the bills:
 - o Governor Henry McMaster
 - o Members of the 125th South Carolina General Assembly

South Carolinians can contact their local Senators and Representatives using the State House's [Legislator Search Tool](#). Remember, you can join the menstrual movement from anywhere in the world! Create your own petition for period equity. There is a community of activists who have your back in this global campaign.

3. Learn more about period inequity locally and globally using the following resources.
 - a. [State of the Period Study 2021](#)
 - b. [GlobalCitizen.org](#)
 - c. [AllianceforPeriodSupplies.org](#)
 - d. [South Carolina Period Poverty Fact Sheet](#)

Period poverty is a systemic issue of global significance. It reinforces the most profound prejudices and social inequalities in existence. However, you can become part of the solution today – no matter where you live – by starting small. Normalize conversations about menstruation with your friends and family. Seek educational materials from outreach organizations like [period.org](#). Ask your state, community, and school leaders how they are ensuring equitable access to pads, tampons, and other menstrual products.

When it comes to menstrual equity, knowledge is power. Period.