

Lindsay Weiss, Volunteer Affiliate Director for I Support The Girls Kansas City

Proponent of HB2461

In person

Good Afternoon To: Chair Rep. Adam Smith, Vice Chair Les Mason, to the ranking member and to all the members of this committee, and to all else it may concern:

My name is Lindsay Weiss and I live in Overland Park, Kansas. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB2461.

For the last 3 years, I have spearheaded the KC branch of an international nonprofit called I Support The Girls. Our main focus is to give the gift of dignity through basic needs. We collect many of the items listed in this bill and distribute to Kansans in need. We give directly to local organizations that provide immediate help to those in crisis or experiencing hardships like homelessness or domestic violence. We also partner with Kansas schools, consisting of elementary, middle and local high schools. The majority of the organizations we serve do not have a budget for menstrual products despite the very real need that exists for these items.

Feminine hygiene products are a medical necessity. In this role, I have seen first-hand the issues that can arise when your constituents cannot access medical necessities like pads and tampons. Most of us are lucky enough not to have finances impact our ability to have products that provide us with these simple dignities, but for many it is a real crisis. Inaccessibility creates serious health and hygiene concerns that only intensifies struggling Kansans difficulties.

Menstrual equity is the term used for providing what a girl or woman needs to continue her life during her period. Menstrual equity is connected to education, health, workforce development and more. I am here to tell you that this issue is impacting your constituents on a daily basis. The taxation of these medically necessary products places an unfair financial burden on Kansas families especially those who are already struggling. Eliminating the sale tax on these items, is a break for ordinary Kansans who you have sworn to serve. This sales tax disproportionately affects women and families and perpetuates poverty. This taxation over a lifetime further adds to the wage gap of women still making .77 cents to every dollar a male counterpart earns. This legislation will not only relieve a financial burden for these basic needs over a lifetime, it will more importantly no longer deem these items as "non-essential" items but recognize that they are 100% necessary.

Finally, HB2461 amends K.S.A. 79-3606. As this Committee is well aware K.S.A. 79-3606 is 37 pages of items that are not taxed in Kansas including: the sale of gold and silver coins, lottery tickets, farm equipment and game fowl. I think most Kansans would agree that eliminating a tax on items that are a medical necessity for half of the population of Kansas once a month is a very reasonable request.

I thank the Committee for giving HB2461 a hearing. and shedding light on this very important issue of menstrual equity. I am asking you to support HB2461 so that Kansas can eliminate this burden on basic needs and give dignity to all Kansas girls and women.