

Senate Bill 59
Equity, Period
Senator Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley)

THIS BILL

We expect restrooms in public spaces to provide basic essentials for health and sanitation. Yet over half of our state’s population needs more than toilet paper and hand washing supplies. Those with a uterus also need period products for health and sanitation.

Anyone who has ever had a period has stories, which they are mostly too ashamed to tell, about their period arriving unexpectedly or not having a tampon or pad accessible. This basic bodily function needs to be recognized and acknowledged. SB 59, “Equity, Period,” will do so by ensuring that all state-owned buildings and those administering state services provide free period products in restrooms. It will also help reduce the legacy of shame associated with menstruation, and improve equity for our workforce and residents.

Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, vice chair of the Legislative Women’s Caucus, is a principal co-author of this legislation.

ISSUE

Despite decades of lawmaking, gender discrimination and stubborn pay gaps persist. Although the gender-pay gap has narrowed and California has made nation-leading progress in pay-transparency, women earn just 82 cents for every dollar a man earns, according to the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But unequal pay is not the only work condition that puts women behind. Workplaces remain fraught with discriminatory practices, and women continue to be denied necessary basic services, like period products, they require to avoid needless interruptions and stress in their lives.

Menstruation is an essential bodily function, and ensuring that menstrual products are free and available in all state government restrooms recognizes that fact. No one should experience shame associated with being unexpectedly caught without period products available. There is no means test for supplying toilet paper in public restrooms – it is expected to be free and accessible to everyone. Period products should be treated the same.

California has recognized that access to menstrual products is both a public health issue and an

economic one. Our state has enacted the most progressive budget and legislative policies to increase access to period products, including ending the tax on these products and requiring that they be provided free of charge in at the State Capitol building, at public schools serving grades 6-12, and at community colleges and the California State University system.

As the Legislature works to further address gender inequities, access to menstrual products must be included in these efforts. SB 59, Equity, Period, will ensure the state is creating inclusive spaces and will have a significant impact on the economic and physical health of the millions of Californians who menstruate.

SOLUTION

Under SB 59, free period products will be offered in all women’s restrooms, all-gender restrooms, and in at least one men’s restroom in:

- All state or state-leased buildings;
- All local government owned buildings where state-funded safety-net programs are administered; and,
- All hospitals that receive state funding.

SUPPORT

California Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations
California Black Health Network
Sisters on the Streets
Citizens for Choice
Plan C

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