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Youth And Government

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FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Committee Assignment: Assembly Freedom 4

Bill #:AF-28

Sponsors: Willa Einstein, Celia Holden, Jimena Perez-Tetuan, Zaida Rio Polanco

An Act To

An act to amend §267 of New York State Consolidated Public Health Law in order to provide feminine hygiene products for public housing tenants

The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose Make feminine hygiene products available at no cost for women in New York State public housing

Summary of Provisions

Section 1: Definitions

Public housing - housing provided for people with low incomes (less than \$58,450 annually), subsidized by public funds

Feminine hygiene products - pads and tampons

Secondary schools - public schools at the middle and high school level

Section 2: Provisions

All elementary and secondary public schools in the state serving students in any grade from grade six through grade twelve shall provide feminine hygiene products in the restrooms of such school building or buildings. Along with elementary and secondary public schools, feminine hygiene products should be provided in public housing as well. Such products shall be provided at no charge to students and tenants.

Justification

This bill is important because it makes sure that menstruating women living in public housing have access to products like pads and tampons. In many struggling families, paying for food, rent and heat might be seen as more important than paying for pads and tampons. Women would be forced to either bleed through clothing or use other alternatives which could be unsanitary and harmful.

Secondary schools already provide these supplies for menstruating girls in all bathrooms. It is immoral to abandon adults living in public housing with these unnecessary costs. These are women that have to stretch out paychecks on a daily basis. They should not have to spend their money on these supplies.

Fiscal Implications



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New York State would spend approximately \$100 every year on one family in need of period products. There are 9,121 households living in New York State public housing. This means that it would cost \$912,100 per year to fund this bill. Although this may seem excessive, the New York State Health budget is \$74,210,952,000, so this bill would only require a reallocation of 0.000012% of the New York State Health budget funds.

Environmental Implications

Pads and tampons do have a significant impact on the amount of plastic pollution created. In fact, close to 20 billion sanitary napkins, tampons and applicators are dumped into North American landfills every year. These products are not biodegradable since they are 90% plastic and their materials could potentially spend hundreds of years in our landfills. Alternative options of disposing feminine supplies are not much better. Burning them would release even more detrimental greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Furthermore, a year's worth of a typical feminine hygiene products leaves a carbon footprint of 5.3 kg CO2 equivalents. The materials that are used to make these pads and tampons contribute to plastic pollution. This is an already existing problem in our society that is not addressed often enough.

Effective Date

This bill will go into effect July 1 of the year following its passage.