

Testimony of Lilly Wall (written and oral)
President and Co-Founder of Honor Moon
Honor Moon Foundation
Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation – Supporting SB 435
March 7, 2024

Dear Chair and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Lilly Wall, and I am a junior at Free State High School in Lawrence, Kansas. I am the President and an inaugural member of Honor Moon Foundation, an inclusive period pantry and non-profit organization located in Lawrence. My friends and I created this non-profit organization after realizing that a large segment of our community struggles to access period products. Our services are accessible to anyone and everyone who menstruates, allowing them to get the products they need free of judgment and charge. Community members access our products at pantries strategically located throughout Lawrence, as well as bathrooms in all Lawrence public high schools. In the past three years since we founded Honor Moon, our organization has distributed over 5,000 products in the Lawrence community.

Around 26% of the global population menstruates, which means that a friend, a sister, a partner, a cousin, or a co-worker around you faces menstruation every month. Purchasing menstrual hygiene products is not a choice for those who get their period. It isn't something you can choose to do or decide to opt out of. Menstruation is not a political issue. Menstruation is not a choice. Menstrual hygiene products are a necessity— one that 64% of people who get their period struggle to afford in their day-to-day lives. The average person who menstruates has 450 periods throughout their lifetime. A box of 34 tampons costs \$8.00 on average. The costs add up quickly, creating a financial strain for many. Period products are a “necessity of life,” just like other medical supplies such as prescription medication or medical equipment. Worse yet, period products have been hit particularly hard by post-pandemic inflationary pressures, putting more Kansas families at risk of losing access to these necessities. There are significant financial barriers impeding access to these products.

There is an urgent need in our state for affordable period products; I myself and my co-board members have seen it firsthand. Our portable pantries are refilled twice a week. Typically, the box empties within hours of restocking. I have seen a dear friend of mine who takes care of her younger sister in a family struggling financially, who is forced to choose between putting a meal on the table or buying a box of tampons that her 13-year-old sister needs. I have experienced classmates approaching me to say that I've “saved their life” or “fixed their day” by making period products available at no charge in the high schools. I have seen homelessness, poverty, and the everyday expectations of life get in the way of affording period products. More importantly, I have seen the positive impact of reliable access to period products.

Eliminating or reducing financial barriers to accessing period products is sound public policy. SB 435 is a bipartisan measure that will provide a sales tax exemption for period products, diapers, and incontinence products. Currently, Kansas levies a 6.5% state sales tax on personal property, which includes tampons, pads, liners, and menstrual cups. Not only would Honor Moon benefit from the eradication of sales tax, but more importantly, Kansans who are inadequately served will have fewer financial obstacles. This bill is the first step to ending a long-lasting tax on menstruators. This is why I, Honor Moon, and its board support SB 435, and I urge the Committee to do the same. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

Lilly Wall (she/her)

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