

Testimony Of Merrit Hale, Founding Member of Honor Moon, a Non-Profit Period Pantry  
Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation — Supporting SB 435 (written only)  
March 7, 2024

Dear Chair and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Merrit Hale and I am a junior at Lawrence Free State High School in Lawrence, Kansas. I've lived in Lawrence my whole life and am proud of the community's supportive and generous spirit. I'm writing to voice my support for the passage of Senate Bill 435. Senate Bill 435 is personally important to me because of my involvement in Honor Moon, a non-profit period pantry based in Lawrence. Honor Moon aims to provide menstrual products free of judgment and free of charge for those in need. Honor Moon started when one of our founding members posed a question to her mom, while walking in Downtown Lawrence, KS, "What do the homeless population do when they get their period?" Her mom did not have an answer for her question. A short time later, the same founding member came to our group of friends and said we should do something about this and we adamantly agreed. In the summer of 2021, Honor Moon was officially created and we started working in support of our mission to make a difference in our community specifically relating to equitable access to menstrual products.

In addition to being a founding member, I am on the Honor Moon board of directors as Director of Product Management and Distribution. In this capacity, I track inventory relating to product donation and product distribution for our two community pantries as well as our three high school pantries. Our community pantries primarily serve community members experiencing homelessness as well as members in the community who struggle to purchase menstrual products. Another community we serve is Lawrence's high school community by regularly stocking bathrooms at both public highschools in Lawrence at Lawrence High and Lawrence Free State. We, at Honor Moon, believe no human should wonder and worry about how they will have access to these products to support healthy personal hygiene. While Honor Moon is relatively new, we have had an incredible amount of feedback from fellow community members who have benefitted from our service as well as numerous Lawrence businesses, nonprofits, social support agencies and local leaders. Feedback ranges from "your products truly saved me" to "you helped me when I was in a bind" to "your community work is inspiring." This feedback, indicating we are addressing a true community need, is the fuel that keeps Honor Moon going and pushes our founding members to identify more ways we can support our mission to support equitable access to menstrual products. Writing in support of the passage for SB 435 is an example that supports the Honor Moon mission.

SB 435 would exempt tax on menstrual products, diapers and incontinence products. SB 435 could help Honor Moon extend our reach and the reach of similar nonprofits because without the tax on these products we would be able to buy more products and we believe our community would donate more products. This past year we supplied almost 2,000 boxes of period products to our community along with other individual products such as individual tampons or pads in personal hygiene kits. We have gotten tremendous feedback and support from our community and everywhere we go there are citizens of our community whether it be friends, business owners or other organizations, we get congratulated on our work and effort in the community. But, we don't do it for the congratulations. We do it for the people who have had to go through the choice of food or period products, we do it for the people that need help and finally, we do it for the people because we care. I highlight the continued support we get because it highlights the true community need for our work. Our goal is to support those without access or means to these personal hygiene products and our goal would have an even greater impact if SB 435 was passed.

So, I respectfully ask the Committee to support SB 435. Thank You.