



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAI‘I

Legislative Testimony

Hō‘ike Mana‘o I Mua O Ka ‘Aha‘ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert

Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai‘i System/Campus

SCR 27 SD1 – URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM TO PROVIDE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS, FREE OF CHARGE, TO STUDENTS AT ALL OF ITS UNIVERSITY, COMMUNITY COLLEGE, AND EDUCATION CENTER CAMPUSES AS PART OF A PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION EQUITY STRATEGY THAT ADDRESSES ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SCR 27 SD1 urging the University of Hawai‘i (UH) to provide menstrual products free of charge as part of a public health and education equity strategy that addresses economic disparities. We are supportive of this resolution.

This resolution aligns with our current UH System Student Basic Needs Master Plan, where UH has adopted The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice definition of students’ basic needs that includes access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing - to sleep, study, cook, and shower; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene care; and childcare and related needs. Providing free period products to our students fits into our current UH System Student Basic Needs Master Plan. UH recognizes that having free menstrual products available to students on campus could help relieve some financial stress and allow students to remain focused on their academic goals instead.

All ten UH campuses have some level of programming that already provides a limited supply of menstrual products to our student population. This resolution involves chancellors meeting with their respective student councils to determine the type and amount of products to be provided, further encouraging continued assessment and sustainability of these programs.

For uniformity purposes, we request one technical amendment to SCR 27 SD1 as currently drafted. Page 2, Line 13-14 “all persons” should be amended to “all students.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this resolution.



SUPPORT for SCR27, SD1 - Requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge in all University of Hawai'i restrooms

House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Honorable Chair Amy Perruso
Honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela

Hearing Date and Time: Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 2:00 pm

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the Committee,

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i **strongly supports SCR27, SD1** which requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms.

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i is a locally grown organization committed to addressing menstrual inequity and ending period poverty (defined as “the inability to buy and access menstrual products, due to factors including but not limited to financial constraints, lack of menstrual health education, feelings of societal shame or stigma surrounding menstruation, and inadequate access to clean facilities to maintain proper hygiene”). Research suggests that this issue disproportionately affects students, low-income and houseless girls and women, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals, and those that are incarcerated. In the last two years, we have donated nearly 40,000 menstrual products to 7 of the 10 public higher education campuses and collaborated with inspiring groups working to meet the need at the 3 other campuses. Thus, we are well-suited to comment on this issue.

Free menstrual products are a public health necessity for our state university system. These campuses support the everyday lives of thousands of students and employees and have long provided a safety net for some of our most vulnerable individuals.

First, menstrual products are a basic health requirement for over half of the student and employee population. In fact, the [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#) adopted new policies in 2021 that recognize the adverse physical and mental health consequences of limited access to menstrual products, and recommend increasing their availability in schools and workplaces. Menstrual products should be considered as ubiquitous as toilet paper and paper towels, which are freely available and regulated throughout the University of Hawai'i system to meet basic health and sanitation needs. It is well-established in research and our own statewide data¹ that when menstruators have limited access to resources during menstruation, they seek other coping methods. This might include using unsafe and potentially harmful alternatives (e.g., leaves, paper towels, and socks), using menstrual products beyond the recommended time, or going with none at all. As a result, menstruators face potentially serious

¹ [2021 report conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i](#)

medical issues including preventable infections that make them susceptible to cervical cancer, infertility, and toxic shock syndrome.

Second, although menstrual products are fundamental for the well-being of over half of the University of Hawai‘i population, they are economically out of reach for a growing number of those menstruators. For example, the 2021 University of Hawai‘i Mānoa Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) found 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity and 14% experienced homelessness. A [2021 report from the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i](#) revealed that 90% of respondents believed menstrual products were expensive and nearly 30% of respondents reported that they or someone in their household experienced difficulty obtaining menstrual products (often due to cost). These data highlight the need for coordinated support to address such health disparities.

In addition, establishing wider access to free menstrual products ensures equitable access to and increased participation in higher education and work. This is very much in line with the spirit of Title IX² legislation. Locally, 50% of [survey](#) respondents reported missing school or work on account of menstruation and indicated that it significantly disrupted participation in their daily activities. Naturally, such disruptions cost considerable time and resources, take a significant toll on social and emotional health³, and can decrease school and work performance. This was evident in a national survey of college-age menstruators published by George Mason University, which found that menstruators who experienced period poverty were 1.8 to 2.3 times more likely to report depressive symptoms than their peers⁴.

The same survey also found that one in ten college students in the United States is affected by period poverty every month, and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. We are currently conducting research in partnership with George Mason University to understand menstruation on the University of Hawai‘i campuses. Preliminary results show that of respondents who menstruated in the past year, 41% reported experiencing past year period poverty. And of those who experienced past year period poverty, 47% experienced it monthly.

Finally, while the student organizations, such as Alpha Kappa Psi, ASUH, UH Women’s Center, and Delta Sigma Pi: Rho Chi Chapter, should be applauded for their efforts to provide menstrual products on campuses, a more coordinated and consolidated system-wide effort is necessary to address disparities across the state. SCR27, SD1 is an initiative that takes steps to do just that, requiring low investment. The average cost of one menstrual product is \$0.20, and we estimate \$2-\$5 annually per biologically female student based on data from the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo and Kapi‘olani Community College - the only schools with campus-wide access.

Excitingly, there are a growing number of governments and institutions that acknowledge menstrual products as a basic health need. Scotland became the first country in the world to pass legislation that offers menstrual products free of charge to anyone who needs them. Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY) also introduced sweeping legislation to address menstrual needs in the federal bill [H.R. 3614 -](#)

² Johnson, M. E., Waldman, E. G., & Crawford, B. J. (2020). Title IX & Menstruation. *Harv. JL & Gender*, 43, 225.

³ [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

⁴ Cardoso, L.F., Scolese, A.M., Hamidaddin, A. et al. Period poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States. *BMC Women's Health* 21, 14 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5>

[Menstrual Equity For all Act of 2021](#). Furthermore, public and private universities across the country are following suit and providing free period products throughout their campuses (e.g., the University of California System, University of Georgia, University of Cincinnati).

We urge you to support **SCR 27, SD1** and welcome you to contact us with any additional questions you may have. Mahalo for your leadership and service to Hawai‘i!

Me ke aloha,
Nikki-Ann Yee
Co-Founder
Ma‘i Movement Hawai‘i



PERIOD.

April 12, 2023

Testimony in support of Hawaii Resolution SCR27 - REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO SUPPORT ENDING MENSTRUAL INEQUITY BY PROVIDING MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS TO ALL PERSONS, FREE OF CHARGE, IN ALL UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII RESTROOMS.

We are writing to testify in strong support of SCR27 which requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms. This resolution is an initiative that takes practical and essential steps to address menstrual inequity for University of Hawai'i students, and allows students impacted by period poverty the opportunity to focus on their academic and extracurricular endeavors.

According to [research](#) led by George Mason University's College of Public Health, nearly **one in ten college students in the US** are affected by period poverty every month, and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were **most likely to report moderate to severe depression**. When students don't have access to period products, they often resort to using other non-safe materials in lieu of menstrual products, use products longer than recommended, or go without any products, impacting their social and emotional health. **Resolution SCR27** can help address this direct need for University of Hawaii students.

As a global youth-fueled nonprofit that strives to eradicate period poverty and stigma through service, education, and advocacy, PERIOD. is proud to follow the lead of Hawaiian menstrual equity organizations like the [Mai'i Movement](#) in support of SCR27. Our strong network of over 400+ volunteer PERIOD. Chapters around the world support the increased access of free menstrual products in school restrooms, and applaud this resolution as a great example.

We at PERIOD. urge all members of this committee to do what is right and unanimously support SCR27 today.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michela Bedard in black ink.

Michela Bedard
Executive Director
[PERIOD.](#)

Handwritten signature of Damaris Pereda in black ink.

Damaris Pereda
National Programs Director
[PERIOD.](#)



ASUH

Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i

YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

I serve as the President of the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii (ASUH) and the Chair of the University of Hawaii Student Caucus (UHSC). I express my strong support for the Senate Concurrent Resolution 27 recognizing the importance in providing menstrual products across restrooms within the UH System. In my roles, I balance supporting the needs of +12,000 undergraduates at UH Mānoa and the +50,000 students across the UH System, and setting effective leadership and speed on this issue is greatly needed. Please see the attached approved ASUH resolution below for the UH BOR to take action to institutionalize this procurement initiative through a comprehensive revenue assessment.

The issue at hand is about reassuring one's dignity despite circumstances: Being able to obtain tampons and pads is a basic necessity that many individuals may take for granted, yet as the cost of living is increasing among the islands and for those who are already struggling to buy food or afford savings for rent, it can be a matter of preserving their dignity and self-respect. By providing menstrual products in public spaces, we can help to ensure that all individuals have the products they need to stay clean, comfortable, and confident in their daily lives.

Demonstrates aloha on a global scale, national level, and within our own local communities: The need for menstrual equity is a pressing issue that affects a vast number of people around the world, and it's essential that we take action to promote change and inspire others to do the same. Menstrual equity is a pressing issue worldwide, with [girls missing up to at least 10% of the school year in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) and [girls dying in isolation in rural Nepal](#). Positive changes are happening, [such as eliminating the tampon tax and providing free menstrual products in the US](#), [establishing a menstrual equity fund in Canada](#), and removing taxes in [Kenya](#) and [Bangladesh](#). Let's use this opportunity to showcase our culture of aloha and promote positive change in the lives of countless individuals who deserve access to basic hygiene products, including menstrual products.

Menstrual products in public spaces is a logical and needed expansion within current basic hygiene offerings. Providing pads and tampons is a basic necessity, much like having tissues nearby for a runny nose or sneeze. Even at some point large-scale efforts to set up running water in tax-payer funded buildings may have been deemed cumbersome, but today we no longer question a basic day-to-day function afforded to the public. We often take toilet paper for granted, but imagine how uncomfortable and unhygienic it would be if we didn't have access to it. Toilet seat covers provide an extra layer of protection for individuals using public restrooms. Soap is an essential product for maintaining cleanliness and preventing the spread of pathogens, and it's expected to be readily available.

Rudy Ramirez,
ASUH President & UHSC Chair

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA
2465 Campus Road, Campus Center 211A
Honolulu HI 96822

**SENATE RESOLUTION 12-23 SUPPORTING AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS
THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE UNDERGRADUATE SENATE:

- WHEREAS,* the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) at Mānoa Senate is the elected body representing approximately 11,000 full-time classified undergraduate students at the flagship institution of the State of Hawai'i; and
- WHEREAS,* the University of Hawaii System, (UH) System, is comprised of ten campuses across the Hawaiian Islands, serving over 50,000 students in higher education, including the Mānoa campus;
- WHEREAS,* the UH System is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students;
- WHEREAS,* it is a well-established practice for the UH System to provide essential hygiene products, such as toilet paper and soap, for the well-being of its students, faculty, and staff; and
- WHEREAS,* the UH system's successful implementation of providing bathroom sanitary products has already demonstrated its commitment to the health and well-being of the community, in form of toilet paper, dispensed soap, and seat liners becoming low-cost and simple; and
- WHEREAS,* the cost of living in the State of Hawaii is among the highest in the nation, and many students struggle to make ends meet;
- WHEREAS,* being unable to readily obtain necessary hygiene products can result in discomfort and embarrassment, as well as negative impacts on health and academic success due to makeshift

measures posing toxic shock risks or results in absenteeism in courses from unanticipated menses; and

BE IT RESOLVED,

that the UH System shall provide essential hygiene products, such as menstrual hygiene products; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

that the UH System shall work with appropriate departments and stakeholders to ensure that these products are easily accessible and available in all campus restrooms and common areas, including but not limited to public appropriations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,

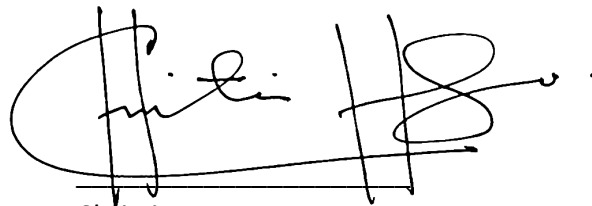
that the UH System shall prioritize implementation that is efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable, exploring all available options, including partnerships with local businesses and organizations, to minimize the financial impact on the UH System and its community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to: the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents Randolph Moore and Members, President David Lassner, Provost Michael Bruno and Members of the Provost Council including Vice-Provost for Student Success Dr Lori Ideta, Associate Vice-Provost Student Success & Dean of Students Dr. Theresa Crichfield, the Graduate Student Organization, Kual'i Council, Mānoa Faculty Senate, Mānoa Staff Senate, and Ka Leo O Hawai'i.

INTRODUCED BY



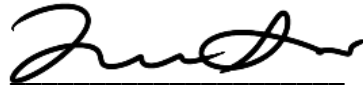
Hayden Kasal-Barsky
Introducing Member
Vice-President



Christian Hermoso
Introducing Member
Senator-At-Large

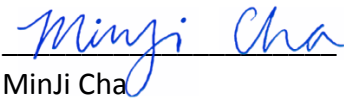


Jason Chen
Introducing Member
Senator-at-Large, Finance Committee



Quinn Goo
Introducing Member
Senator, College of Arts and Sciences

THIS RESOLUTION WAS PASSED AND ENACTED ON THE 6TH OF MARCH 2023



MinJi Cha
Secretary



Rudy Ramirez
President

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 2:19:00 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology,

I am in strong support of SCR27 SD1. This is an important step towards menstrual equity for members of our community who cannot afford to pay for period products. University students are burdened with all kinds of financial obligations and many of them are parents with children to provide for. Not everyone will need these products at no cost, but we should ensure that those who do need them have access.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 2:21:29 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Airabella Molina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Amy Perruso, Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

My name is Airabella Molina and I am a recent graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa with my BA in Public Health with a minor in Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies. I am a resident of the Kaneohe/Kahaluu district. I am very passionate about Period Poverty in Hawaii as well as addressing Period Poverty at the university and community college levels.

I had the opportunity to intern with Ma'i Movement Hawai'i this past summer for one of my capstone classes and I enjoyed it so much that I continue to volunteer with them today; mainly being a point person responsible for coordinating products with the university/cc efforts. I also just completed a policy analysis paper on implementing period products for free at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

I am testifying in strong support of SCR27, which requests the University of Hawaii to support ending menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawaii restrooms. This bill is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campus and end period poverty that requires low investment.

It is important because I have witnessed Period Poverty firsthand. Peers and myself have struggled with the inability to access menstrual products due to lack of income, education, cultural or societal shame or sanitary places to maintain hygiene. Period Poverty is a huge issue in Hawai'i and is a pressing public health concern. Menstruating college students (may identify with any gender) who are struggling with period poverty often don't know

where/when they can access free menstrual products, so having places at school that spread awareness about period poverty and that provide free products, would be very helpful. This is what made me passionate to end Period Poverty in Hawai'i along with Ma'i Movement.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. Statewide statistics in a 2021 survey conducted by Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and Ma'i Movement Hawai'i found that 42% of respondents reported missing class or leaving school early due to a lack of accessibility to period products.

New research led by George Mason University's College of Public Health found that one in ten college students in the US is affected by period poverty every month and 14% experienced period poverty in the past year. Compared to those who had never experienced period poverty, those who did were most likely to report moderate to severe depression. Furthermore, inadequate access resulted in respondents resorting to coping methods, like using other materials in lieu of products, using products longer than the recommended time, or going without any products.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity report for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty.

The bill addresses this issue and promotes common goals of public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 3:31:49 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **SCR27**, which requests the University of Hawai‘i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai‘i restrooms. This resolution is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 2:48:04 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Camacho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for supporting menstrautors in Hawai'i.

SCR27 Testimony

**By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College**

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in support of SCR27, which requests that the University of Hawai‘i support ending menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai‘i restrooms. This resolution that takes the first step to address menstrual inequity on all campuses and help to end period poverty for our students.

Passing this resolution is important and much needed because it affects student success. All women have a story of needing a menstrual product in public. When I first started teaching at Kapi‘olani Community College 19 years ago, my period started about five minutes before I was scheduled to teach my last history class for the day. Cancelling class was not an option because it would have negatively impacted the students and their progress in the course. I didn’t have any period products, there was no one around to ask (which is often embarrassing and uncomfortable especially if you don’t know the person), and there were no product dispensers, not even old-fashioned ones that required quarters, anywhere on campus. So, what did I do? I went to the bathroom, used toilet paper to craft a “makeshift” pad, took my sweatshirt and wrapped it around my waist, and taught my one hour and fifteen minute class. I told students that I could not stay after class due to an appointment and I immediately headed home. This is just one of thousands of stories which justifies providing free menstrual products on campus.

In Fall 2017, members of the Alpha Kappa Psi chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society at Kapi‘olani Community College (for which I am the advisor), identified the lack of menstrual products on campus as a major concern, which caused students to miss class if they unexpectedly started their period and did not have any products with them. They also noted that many students could not afford period products and thus were forced to stay home during their menstrual cycles each month. Honor Society students did a petition drive and got nearly 1,000 signatures (from students, faculty, and staff) in support of the college providing free menstrual products on campus. They also decided that it was important to do a pilot project to gather data and for the semester they provided free tampons and pads in four restrooms on campus.

They hung “makeshift” plastic tub dispensers, posted signage, and spread awareness on campus. One Honor Society student was responsible for monitoring, refilling, and recording the data for one of the four restrooms at least once a week for the entire semester. All of the products (tampons and pads) were purchased by the Honor Society. One of the Hallmarks of PTK is service and this, according to the students, was a much needed campus service project. During the semester, the chapter received unsolicited positive feedback from our campus community. One professor wrote, “Just wanted to say how much I appreciate the Honor Society’s project! I used the ‘Iliahi restroom yesterday, and saw the feminine hygiene products in the bathroom. Great idea and so needed! Another staff member wrote, “I am so proud of our campus today. Please give a shout out to the KCC Honor Society for setting up free feminine hygiene products throughout our space. Although I am an analyst now and don’t interact with students as much, I know that during my time as a reference librarian, there were occasions when women needed

SCR27 Testimony

**By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College**

something and we didn't have a pad or tampon available. This will make for a more comfortable campus. Great work!”

In Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, the first year of the pilot project, a total of 1,944 tampons and 2,732 pad were used. This was an indication of the success of the initiative, but more importantly that there was a clear need for providing free menstrual products and so the Honor Society students felt it necessary to continue to do this. As the recipient of a 2019 Women’s Campus Club grant, I was able to help the students scale up the program, by purchasing seven one-touch dispensers that each hold 50 tampons and 50 pads. Since the project began we have dispensed over 10,000 tampons and 15,000 pads.

So, today on the Kapi‘olani CC campus seven restrooms, including one gender-neutral restroom dispense free menstrual products. The seven restrooms that were chosen were selected in such a way that all areas of the campus are covered, meaning that no one is more than one or two buildings away from a restroom where free products are available. For the past five years, the free menstrual product program has continued to be fully student driven (monitoring, refilling products, and recording data) and student funded, through the Honor Society. Despite the success and scalability of the KapCC program, it is not sustainable. Furthermore, it is my belief that we as a university system should not be asking our students to pay out of pocket for menstrual products, which are necessary due to one’s biology. We don’t ask student organizations to buy toilet paper, soap, paper towels, or toilet seat covers and we shouldn’t be asking students to pay for menstrual products, which are dispensed much less frequently and thus more affordable for the university when compared to these other restroom products.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. In Fall 2017, 58.9 percent of the student body at Kapi‘olani Community College identified as female and in Fall 2022, 64.5 percent did. Despite the fact that enrollment has declined over the years, the number of students who identify as female has increased by 5.6 percent. As of Fall 2020, there were 511 total employees at Kapi‘olani CC and 282 identified as female, which is 55%. With such an overwhelming majority of individuals who identify as female, it is clear that if UH truly believes in “student success,” they must provide free menstrual products in restrooms on all campuses and education centers.

Lastly, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity [report](#) for the University of Hawai'i found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, and 14% experienced homelessness in the previous year. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty. In Fall 2020, KapCC held a “Fuel for Finals” drive in which students were given tickets to choose free basic necessities, like food, menstrual products, toiletries, etc. The most popular items were food and the second most popular were menstrual products, which indicates many of our students experience some degree of period poverty.

SCR27 Testimony

**By Julie Rancilio, Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Advisor at Kapi‘olani Community College**

While, I support the resolution, it is unfortunate that it does not include the necessary funding. It would be unheard of to pass a resolution, for example, asking the university to provide free toilet paper, and then not allocating the money for it. Menstrual products should not be seen differently than toilet paper. I am hopeful that in the near future the legislature will appropriate money to ensure that menstrual products are freely available on all of the UH campuses and education centers. It is critical that UH and the state of Hawai‘i do its part to help end period poverty and move us closer to gender equity in higher education.

Providing free menstrual products leads to greater student success. Please vote “yes” to support this resolution and help make UH a leader nationally in promoting public health, basic equity, gender equality, and education equity for all members of our campus communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

Julie M. Rancilio

Professor of History and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Advisor

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 5:22:10 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea McDonough	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **SCR27**, which requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms. This resolution is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

I support this because I have experienced first hand the effects of period poverty. Unsuspectingly started your period while on campus for a day of classes and not have access to the proper supplies is more than an inconvenience. However with the support of this measure, we can lessen the negative effects of period poverty and move towards ending period inequalities across campus.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 6:45:55 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kecia Costa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of **SCR27**, which requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms. This resolution is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

Approving this would help students and staff members around campus because menstrual products are not always easily assessable.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 4:57:03 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

April 11, 2023

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of SCR27, which requests the University of Hawai'i to support menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai'i restrooms. This resolution is an initiative that takes steps to address menstrual inequity on campuses and end period poverty that requires low investment.

In 2021, Ma'i Movement Hawai'i and the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women published a study to better understand the ways that period poverty affects the menstruators of our state. The study found that 42% of respondents had missed school or left class early due to their periods, especially because of barriers including cost, knowledge, accessibility, and stigma. Additionally, a 2021 Basic Needs Insecurity Report for the University of Hawai'i (UH) found that 58% of students experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity. Those that suffer from basic needs insecurity are disproportionately impacted by period poverty. Establishing wider access to free menstrual products on UH campuses and education centers would help to reduce barriers that students face in meeting their basic needs. This resolution encourages an increase in the inclusivity of our university facilities, and promotes greater menstrual equity throughout the UH system.

Every person deserves the opportunity to pursue a high-quality education in an environment that promotes public health equity, education equity, and mental and emotional well-being. Menstruation is a bodily function that is just as important as any other bodily function. It is a biological process, and people who menstruate cannot simply

“opt out” of having their periods. Thus, menstrual products are a basic necessity like toilet paper, hand soap, and other personal hygiene products, but are economically out of reach for a growing number of menstruating girls, women, and gender-diverse people. The UH campuses currently provide soap, toilet paper, and paper towels in their bathrooms (and continue to stock them when vandalism or theft occurs) because those are basic necessities that people need to address their bodily functions. The UH system doesn’t expect non-menstruators to provide their own rolls of toilet paper in each of its buildings, yet it currently does expect menstruators to provide their own menstrual products. This is unfair and has been the status quo for far too long. The University of Hawai‘i can do better, and the students of UH deserve better.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

Mahalo nui loa,

Sarah Kern

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 7:13:18 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denielle M. Pedro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee,

I am testifying in **strong support of SCR 27**, which would request the University of Hawaii to support ending menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawaii restrooms.

I am a female law student attending the William S. Richardson School of Law testifying in my personal capacity. **I have both witnessed my peers experience "menstrual inequity" or difficulties due to lack of access to menstrual products, and have experienced it myself.** Many of my peers are juggling difficult coursework, jobs, families, and economic disparities due to the unprecedented high cost of living in our state. It is not uncommon for students to share menstrual products with each other, because we are facing acute financial situations and cannot afford products. It is difficult for my peers, who are talented advocates for the public interest, for indigenous rights, for the environment, and for their communities, to focus on their passions when they cannot afford basic necessities like menstrual products.

Although small-scale, voluntary efforts have been made by good samaritans in our school to address menstrual inequity, **this should not be a cost that good samaritans have to absorb for UH.** Menstruators should have access to menstrual products **in the same way that public restrooms and free toilet paper provide relief for other bodily functions.** In positively reinforcing its commitment to addressing period poverty and menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products, free of charge, in all University restrooms, **I believe that UH will also be helping to dispell societal shame and stigma surrounding menstruation** by funding this effort openly, rather than being complicit in menstruators suffering silently in their institutions.

Studies conducted by the legislature as well as by organizations like the Ma'i Movement Hawaii have shed light on the **startling hidden impacts of menstrual inequity on our State.** In a 2021 study conducted by the legislature and Ma'i Movement Hawaii, it was discovered that **nearly half of respondents had missed class or left school because they did not have access to menstrual prodcuts.** Furthermore, the legislature found that **chronic absenteeism is one of the most powerful predictors of student success or failure.** In light of these discoveries, it is easy to see how **this straightforward measure will address chronic absenteeism at UH and have lasting positive effects for our community and for our great State.**

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify **in strong support** of this measure.

(Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this testimony are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of any entities they represent.)

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 8:06:26 AM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Landry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Committee Members,

I am testifying to strongly support **SCR27**, which supports menstrual inequity by providing menstrual products to all persons, free of charge, in all University of Hawai‘i restrooms.

This initiative is vital to assist struggling students (and new faculty) to bridge the divide between cost of living and historically low pay at UH. I have witnessed first hand both undergraduate and graduate students struggle to make ends meet. This issue is unexpectedly greater for graduate students who often pay for college on their own or hold graduate/research assistantships - which provides a monthly salary that barely covers rent and food. The salary provided to new, assistant or untenured faculty is far below a living wage in our state.

Please consider supporting this measure for menstrual equity. When people cannot afford period products, use of other items to manage menstruation is unhealthy and dangerous.

Thank you for your time,

Landry Fukunaga

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 10:28:26 PM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lara Jean Hackney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do support this bill.

thank you,
Lara

SCR-27-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 11:09:28 AM

Testimony for HET on 4/12/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Riyana Werny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Menstration is a bodily function that women do not get to choose to have or not. There are wonderful period products in the world that allow women now to work and go about their daily lives while on their period. However, these products are EXPENSIVE and add up, especially for low income families or families with more than 2 menstruators in their household. I personally have experienced what it is like to not have the appropriate menstrual products on me when i got my period. Usually, if I don't have a tampon or pad on hand, I roll toilet paper around my underwear, which is uncomfortable, especially while at school or at work. It happens a lot to probably everyone who menstrates. If we had free products accessible in all school bathrooms it would definitely improve the well-being of all menstruating students.