



October 2, 2019

Honorable Lynn Afendoulis, Chair
House Tax Policy Committee
1092 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Greetings Rep. Afendoulis and Members of the House Tax Policy Committee:

The American Association of University Women of Michigan **supports passage of HB 4165 and 4166** which would exempt feminine hygiene products from the Michigan sales and use taxes.

Feminine hygiene products are a basic necessity for a hygienic response to the basic bodily function of menstruation, something only women experience. It is estimated to cost between \$7 and \$10 a month to buy these products. Over the 40 years that a woman menstruates, it adds up to a lifetime cost of between \$3,360 and \$4,800 to handle this basic bodily function.

For poor women, the tax creates an even more dramatic burden. Many federal assistance programs such as **SNAP** (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and **WIC** (Women, Infants and Children) don't allow the use of an EBT card for products such as pads or tampons despite the products' classification as medical devices.

The IRS does not classify female products as medical devices, thus blocking women from buying them with pre-tax dollars in both flexible spending accounts and health savings accounts.¹

Taxing women's menstrual periods by imposing a sales or use tax is just not fair. As of June 2019, twelve states specifically exempted these essential hygiene products (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and California). The AAUW of Michigan urges Michigan to join them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mary Pollock
Government Relations Coordinator