

To: Members of the Senate Education Finance and Senate Education Policy Committees

From: Sandy Velazquez, 1425 Galtier St., Saint Paul, MN

Chair Cwodzinski, Chair Kunesh, and committee members, my name is Sandy Velazquez and I am a Health Mentor at El Colegio High School. I provide this statement in support of SF50, which would provide access to menstrual products in Minnesota school bathrooms.

As a Health Mentor my role at El Colegio is to provide students with resources and information on how to keep their bodies healthy. Part of that includes providing education on topics like puberty and naturally menstruation, and so access to menstrual products. I currently help stock one of the school bathrooms with these types of resources and this being my 2nd year here at the school managing those resources, I see first hand the high need the students have when it comes to having access to these resources. You see, at El Colegio we often get students who have recently arrive to the U.S. and most of the time they arrive with hardly anything. So being able to provide these things takes some of the burden off their load and they can instead focus on coming to school and staying in school. I stock these supplies at least once a week and I get these supplies primarily from donations. I also provide 1on1 education to the students and a lot of our students often come and talk to me about their cycle, in one situation we have had special education students going a full day with out being able to change their pads, leading to having them change their clothes due to leaking out, and we have been working with these students to teach them the skills on how to take care of their body, but also being able to stock the bathroom consistently and show these students that we have supplies for them so they don't have to wait all day is key. There also have been a handful of other students who have had to change or go home when accidents happen. As of right now we must keep a stock of not only menstrual products but change of underwear and pants for our students who have accidents to try our best to keep them at school. If we had a more reliable way of sustainably keeping these resources for our students here at school, it would be less of a burden on us the support staff who must continuously try to find donations of both clothes, and hygiene products for our students. If the chairs and committee were to decide to put menstrual products in the school bathrooms across the state of Minnesota, I do believe that we would see more students at school and staying in school. We would be supporting our students who menstruate and demonstrating to them that when we say we care about their overall health and wellbeing, we mean it!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sandy Velazquez