



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Friday, February 10, 2023, at 2:30 p.m.

By

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HB 481 – RELATING TO MENSTRUAL EQUITY

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill (HB) 481 relating to menstrual equity. We support the intent of this bill and offer the following comments.

HB 481 would require the University of Hawai'i (UH) to provide menstrual products free of charge to all students on any UH campus. This requirement aligns with our current UH System Student Basic Needs Master Plan where UH has adopted The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (The Hope Center) 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.

In 2020, The Hope Center and the UH System Basic Needs Committee administered the RealCollege Survey to all students in the UH System. The study found that of those who responded, 39% were food insecure within the prior 30 days, 44% were housing insecure within the last year, and 14% experienced homelessness within the last year. While a specific question was not asked about access to menstrual products, the female students who reported experiencing the above basic needs challenges are at highest risk of also experiencing period poverty. UH recognizes that having menstrual products available to students for free on campus could potentially help relieve some financial stress and allow students to remain focused on their academic goals instead.

All ten campuses of the University have some level of programming that already provides a limited supply of menstrual products to our student population. Our vision to expand this program to the degree contemplated in the bill would require an appropriation, and we would suggest \$1,000,000.00.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.