

Civics Project Showcase: Price and Accessibility of Feminine Products

Introduction

- First we brainstormed different ideas
- We talked to other students about their own topics
- Then researching a specific topic everyone decided on/shared to class/voted on what felt best
- Our class saw that the prices of feminine products was an issue, and that it was not accessible to everyone in need. We find it unfair that not everyone could be able to buy those products.
- We chose it because our class saw it as a problem and wanted to figure out a solution. We wanted to spread awareness toward this topic so it could be seen.
- This is not only about money it's also about hygiene because it can also cause health problems to women who are in need of products, and need to wear certain products longer and can cause, toxic shock syndrome, which can be fatal.

Research

SNAP benefits give an average \$220 per dependent(child under 13, dependent 65+ adult, disabled). Up to 30% of your net monthly income can be given for SNAP benefits. The average person spends around 180-200 per year, and 8000-16000 in their lifetime on menstrual products alone. Surveys show that many women living paycheck to paycheck often have to choose food over feminine hygiene products and homeless women report increased infection rates due to misuse or limited access of products. The Massachusetts government has many programs to help impoverished families afford basic necessities, including but not limited to:

- Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program(CSFP)
- Community Supported Agriculture(CSA)
- Women Infants and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program(SNAP)
- Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program(MEFAP)
- Healthy Incentives Program(HIC)
- Massachusetts Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Food banks

Not one of them covers the price of menstrual products. There are programs that require these products in public spaces, but based on our research, **57.1%** of people report almost never seeing free products. In that same survey, we found that **16.1%** of people are sure they have been unable to afford menstrual products at some point and **11.7%** said that they might have been unable to afford them at some point. Only **7.1%** of people report spending less than \$100 on feminine hygiene products, meaning **92.9%** of people are spending at least that every year.

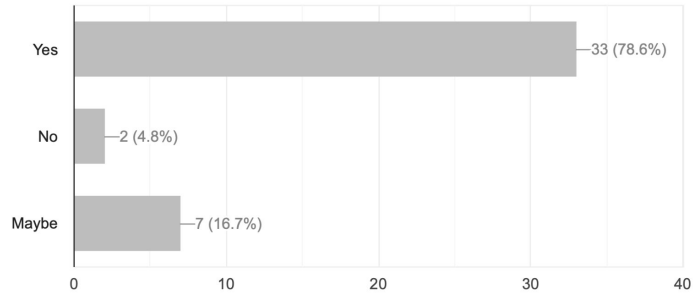
Action Research

After we had discussed and concluded on the problem and how it affected people, we wanted to see how it affected our community close by. We had printed out posters with a QR code that led to an online survey that people would fill out. After about a week or so, we checked into the study, and it showed many results that helped us determine the main points we needed to target when sending the email further down the road.

Action Research

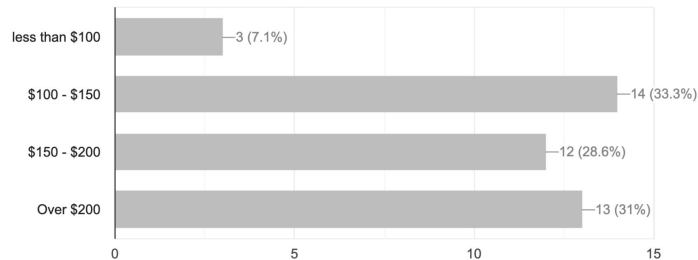
Have you ever experienced the "pink tax"? Pink tax is when products marketed towards women are more expensive

0 / 42 correct responses



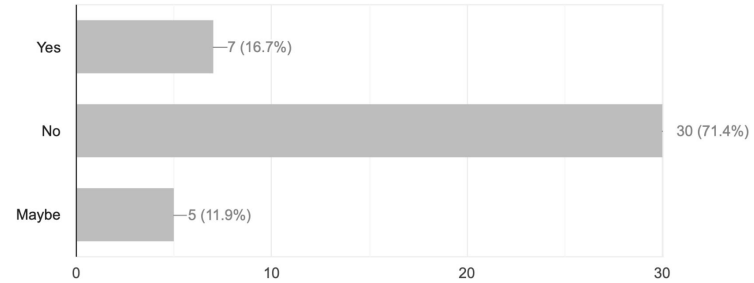
About how much do you spend on menstrual products every year?

0 / 42 correct responses



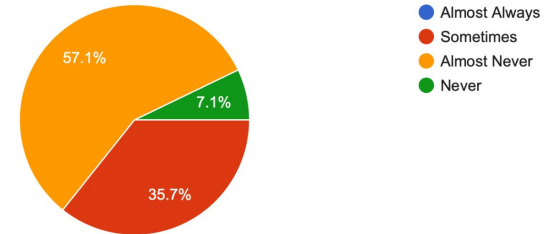
Have you ever been unable to afford menstrual products?

0 / 42 correct responses



How many times have you seen free menstrual products in public spaces?

42 responses



Policy

- The policy we chose to petition is SNAP benefits, we chose this because it allows people to access products for their basic needs, for hygiene food and clothing. Since feminine products are a basic need, they should be supported by SNAP benefits
- We contacted Jeff McCue to make a change, by doing so we are emailing him the major issue we found regarding feminine product prices.
- The reason why we chose Jeff McCue as our person to contact is because he is the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources

Product

Petition for Feminine Products to be Included in SNAP Benefits

Menstrual products are not covered by SNAP Benefits, SNAP covers necessary items such as food and seeds or plants that produce food. The average person spends 8000-16000 dollars on menstrual products in their lifetime, making this a major expense. People should not have to go without these products if they cannot afford them, we believe that covering these products under SNAP would make a major impact.

[illegible]



Lindsey LeBlanc <lleblanc@monomoy.edu>

Product

MRHS Civics Project; SNAP Benefits Proposal

Lindsey LeBlanc <lleblanc@monomoy.edu>
To: jeffrey.mccue@state.ma.us

Fri, May 9, 2025 at 11:21 AM

Hello Mr. McCue,

We are eleventh grade students from Monomoy Regional High School. Our history class would like to bring a petition to your attention: including menstrual products in SNAP Benefits. Through personal research, we discovered that when drug stores receive feminine hygiene products there is a markup of around 30 percent and with that on top of already expensive hygiene products it can be a huge drain on some women's ability to live in this economy. A person spends around \$150-\$300 per year on menstrual products, depending on the type used. Over a lifetime, the average person spends \$8000-\$16000 and some people can't afford the products. The majority of homeless women report having to use products for longer than recommended, this is unsafe and can lead to infections or even toxic shock syndrome.

We believe that access to these basic necessities is fundamental to public health. Ensuring that feminine hygiene products are included in SNAP benefits will reflect Massachusetts' commitment to equality for everyone. By adding these products to the list of eligible items, we would be taking a step towards gender equality

SNAP is meant to help people meet basic living needs. If period products are a monthly, unavoidable cost, they should qualify under the program. Helping people access period products reduces medical problems caused by unsafe alternatives. That means lowered health care costs for families and the system over time.

We understand that providing free menstrual products to everyone in the state may be financially impossible. However we urge the Massachusetts government to take steps to ensure that people who are unable to afford menstrual products, especially those living in poverty, can have access to these necessities. This goal can be achieved by providing SNAP benefits for women who can not afford it.

In support of this issue, we have received 100 signatures (attached to this email) to encourage these changes to SNAP benefits. We appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to your response.

Best regards,
A class of MRHS 11th grade students



SNAP Petitions.pdf
1134K

Works Cited

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