

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS GABRIELA COLETTA, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE,
BREADON, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA,
MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN ACT TO INCREASE
ACCESS TO DISPOSABLE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS
(H.534/S.2491)

WHEREAS, Menstrual products are necessary for half of our population and essential to all menstruating individuals' personal and mental health. Period poverty, or not being able to afford menstrual products, is a common concern for low-income menstruating individuals in high-income countries; *and*

WHEREAS, The federal government does not allow food stamps or WIC funds to be used for menstrual products. Approximately 1 out of 10 menstruators in Massachusetts live in poverty and struggle to pay for menstrual products; *and*

WHEREAS, A 2019 study by the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Mass NOW) found over half of school nurses reported students missed class to obtain menstrual products and a quarter of shelters did not distribute menstrual products; *and*

WHEREAS, Period poverty is a public health issue, and addressing period poverty can lead to reduced economic inequity, educational disparities, and improved health. According to a 2023 study conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), 12 states and DC provide free products in schools, 24 states and DC provide free menstrual products in correctional facilities, and at least 3 states provide free menstrual products in homeless shelters; *and*

WHEREAS, The I AM bill, (H.534/S.2491): An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools, is critical state legislation that will provide free menstrual products to all menstruating people in Massachusetts prisons, homeless shelters, and public schools, including our elementary schools; *and*

WHEREAS, The I AM Bill is being considered by the Massachusetts State Legislature and in October 2023 it was passed by the Senate unanimously for the second consecutive legislative session. The I AM Bill is endorsed by numerous professional associations including the Massachusetts Sheriffs Association, AFT MA, Massachusetts Medical Society Women, NASW-MA, National Women's Law Center, The School Superintendent Association of MA; *and*

WHEREAS, The Mayor's Office of Women Advancement has launched a menstrual product

program in partnership with SOS and Aunt Flow, to provide access to menstrual products in municipal buildings like Boston Public Libraries and Boston Public Schools; *and*

WHEREAS, Menstrual products are essential for long-term physical, mental, and economic health. Boston must continue to work toward reducing shame and stigma associated with a lack of income or accessibility to menstrual products; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council hereby supports the I AM bill, (H.534/S.2491) and that this resolution be forwarded to Boston legislative delegation, urging them to advocate for the passage of the I AM bill.

Filed in Council: May 1, 2024