

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Ways & Means
For HB 300

Compiled on: Monday, March 6, 2023 12:14 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 6, 2023 10:00 AM

Courtney DeBower

self

Austin, TX

This is a really great bill and wonderful news for women and babies. We are a state that claims to care about the littlest Texans and this is an easy way to ensure they have the products they need to be healthy.

barbara johnson, CEO Hope Supply Co. diaper bank

Hope Supply Co.

Dallas, TX

I have led the Hope Supply Co. diaper bank in Dallas for a decade. During this time I have learned about material need and the negative effects it has on children and families. More families than I could have imagined simply cannot afford the basic items to keep their infants and toddlers healthy with clean diapers and wipes, diaper rash cream and other hygiene items. Removing tax on diapers and other basics can save a family an entire month's worth of diapers. This will go a long way in relieving maternal/family stress and in creating a better environment for children. It is the least our great and wealthy state can do to take care of its families. Please join the nonprofit organizations who are bearing so much of the burden of caring for Texas citizens. With respect and gratitude.

Analisa Cantu

Austin Diaper Bank

Austin, TX

1 in 3 Texas families is struggling to keep their babies in clean diapers. Removing the sales tax on diapers and other family care items will change the lives of thousands of Texans and will provide a brighter and healthier future for our communities.

Jazzmin Hernandez

Self

Austin, TX

Many Texan families have to or have had to choose on basic needs for every day life. Coming from a single parent household, my mother sacrificed a lot for me, some she doesn't talk about because it matter because I was fed, clothed, and happy. This bill will help so many mothers and children be fed, clothed, and happy. And that starts with this bill being passed.

Emily Adams
Self
Cedar Park, TX

As a Texas resident, I take pride in community. Community to me means providing all residents with the resources they need to live healthy and successful lives. Penalizing families, nurturing future leaders and contributors to the economy by taxing them on basic human needs such as diapers, is not a representation of Austin's commitment to our community. I wholeheartedly support Ms. Howard and the people of Austin by advocating for an exemption from the use of tax on diapers.

Heather Moyer
Austin Diaper Bank
Austin, TX

Removing the tax on diapers, wipes and period supplies will impact each family, baby and individual in Texas in a profound way. Eliminating the tax on these items not only helps budgets but it also symbolically shows the State of Texas cares about the issues families and individuals face daily. Today, you have the ability to help improve lives by removing the burden of tax on essential diapers, wipes and period supplies. Thank you for your service to Texas citizens and consideration.

Elizabeth Yehaskel
self
Austin, TX

Any parent or woman knows that diapers, wipes, and period supplies are not "nice to have" items. They are necessities. They are already expensive, so much so that many in our community can't afford them. There are parents who can't afford diapers and must either reuse them, or swaddle their infant in paper towels. Regarding expensive period supplies, there are girls who skip school on days they have their period because they can't afford pads or tampons. The Austin Diaper Bank and other organizations do what they can to provide these families access to baby and period supplies, but because the need is so great for these required items, they can't reach everyone. The legislature can help ease the burden by removing tax on these essential items, providing a small bit of relief to families.

I urge to remove sales and use taxes from these items which all families require.

Ami Cheek, Development Manager, Hope Supply Co. Diaper Bank
Hope Supply Co.
Dallas, TX

Basics aren't basics – they're essential! Diapers are as essential to a baby's healthy development as a mother's love. Keeping infants and toddlers clean, dry, and healthy is key to building a solid foundation for all children to reach their full potential. But one in three families struggles to provide clean diapers for their baby. Children in low-income families are at greatest risk of suffering the effects of diaper need because many families can't afford diapers. Current public support programs help some, but young children have additional needs necessary to build a strong foundation for healthy growth and to reach their full potential.

Daycares require parents to bring their own diapers for their child. If parents cannot provide diapers, their child cannot go to daycare. If their child cannot go to daycare, they cannot go to work. That means missed pay and possibly loss of job.

Every single dollar counts for low income families living paycheck to paycheck. Every dollar allocated towards rent, electricity, food, transportation, clothing, education, etc., not having to pay tax on diapers and period supplies can mean more food on their table, or gas to drive to work. I think that is something most of us take for granted. When we need something, we buy it. That is simply not the case for more and more families.

Please understand the seriousness of this and thank you for all you do to represent them. We appreciate all you do.

Allison Steinberg

Self - Marketing/Operations Professional

Austin, TX

As 2022 Board Chair of the Austin Diaper Bank and a board member for three years before that, I have extensive experience with Diaper Need and Period Poverty. This bill is absolutely imperative to helping the 1 in 3 families in Texas who struggle to afford enough diapers each month for their babies.

Although saving the tax on diapers and wipes may seem relatively small, the individual impact to families struggling with basic needs is huge. Not paying tax on diapers would provide enough savings for a family to purchase an additional month's worth of diapers each year - that is a HUGE benefit to these families. Poverty is a vicious cycle - no diapers mean no childcare (most childcare centers require parents to provide disposable diapers), and no childcare means no work for the parent(s) - so the cycle of poverty continues. Diapers cannot be purchased with food stamps and are not supported by state or federal child safety-net programs. Exempting diapers and wipes from sales tax is an important step forward to making these basic needs items more affordable.

Austin Diaper Bank also supports families with period supplies through the Bright Spot program. Similar to diapers, many people struggle to afford period supplies, which are absolutely essential for school, work and everyday life. Exempting these basic needs items from sales tax is a critical step forward that Texas can take to support individuals in our state.

From a financial standpoint, the impact to the Texas budget from these tax exemptions will be minimal, but the impact to individuals and families in our state is massive. Thank you for your support!

Gabriela Andrade

Self (Web Developer)

Pflugerville, TX

1 in 3 Texas families cannot afford enough diapers for their babies. It is unconscionable that a family should have to choose between food and diapers. A lack of diapers can lead to unsanitary conditions and harm a child's health; the same can be said of a lack of sufficient period products. Women who continue to use pads or tampons beyond the recommended span of time (as many are prone to doing when trying to "stretch" supplies) risk rashes, infections, and toxic shock syndrome, which can prove fatal. A 2021 study found 2 in 5 people have struggled to purchase period products. Period products and diapers are not luxuries, but necessities. Ending the sales tax on diapers would allow parents to purchase an additional month supply of diapers for their child. This bill is a step in the right direction for ensuring the safety and health of women and infants.

Holly McDaniel

Austin Diaper Bank

Austin, TX

I am writing in support of HB300. This bill will help Texas Families with the essential items they need each day to live healthy lives. Removing the sales tax on diapers and other essential items will help to alleviate strained budgets for low income families.

The money saved on just diapers will be around \$87 each year. Which is equivalent to a months supply of diapers; two tanks of gas; school supplies for 2 kids and other items that will be spent on families.

Overall, removing the sales tax from diapers can help improve the financial situation of low-income families, reduce the burden on women, and improve the health and well-being of children and their caregivers.

Thank you.

Monique Mathis
opportunitiesforwbc
Bartlett, TX

I am writing in support of hb300. This bill will help Texas Families with the essential items they need each day to live healthy lives. Removing the sales tax on diapers and other essential items will help to alleviate strained budgets for low-income families.

Laura Landsman
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

I am writing in support of HB300. This bill will help Texas Families with the essential items they need each day to live healthy lives. Removing the sales tax on diapers and other essential items will help to alleviate strained budgets for low-income families.

Christina Tarbox
St. Andrew's Food Pantry
Round Rock, TX

- The money saved on just diapers will be around \$87 each year. That's enough to cover school supplies for two children, another essential item for families. Please pass this bill.

Leslie Harper
St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, food and diaper pantry
Pflugerville, TX

Please remove the sales tax on diapers and other essential items to reduce strained budgets for low-income families.

Lainie Polland
Independent
Austin, TX

This is so important for the health and safety of children. Any reduction in costs for necessities can make a huge impact on families who may already be struggling.

Laura Lee Daigle
Self, Graphic Designer
Austin, TX

As a Texas resident, woman, and mother, I fully support HB300. Diapers, wipes and period supplies are clearly essential items for more than half Texas residents. And as essential items they should be exempt from sales tax. Removing the tax will significantly make these items more accessible to those that need them. This is especially important in low income areas where Texas residents are often forced to make difficult choices. Food or period supplies? Electricity or Diapers? These are impossible decisions to make, and Texas needs to do everything possible to be sure ALL residents have access to basic necessities. HB300 will make a meaningful impact and should be passed and implemented this session, without question. Thank you for your time and efforts on this matter!

Bruce Kentros
Self - Senior Coordinator
Austin, TX

Please support HB300. I help with a food pantry/diaper bank and it would mean so much to us.

Holly Firestone
Self- self employed
West Lake Hills, TX

This is an absolute must for Texas families. We MUST support our children and families by removing taxes on these necessary items.

Luisana Klein
Self QA specialists III
Round Rock, TX

I am writing in support of HB300. This bill will help Texas Families with the essential items they need each day to live healthy lives. Removing the sales tax on diapers and other essential items will help to alleviate strained budgets for low-income families.

Aletha Laterza
OWBC
Marble Falls, TX

I am in support of this bill to help families with the purchase of diapers and wipes. The tax money saved on these purchases will help low-income families with future purchases of essentials without further hardship.

Catherine Ashton
Self
PFLUGERVILLE, TX

I am writing in support of Texas Legislature Bill HB300, which seeks to exempt certain family care items from sales and use taxes. In particular, I strongly believe that diapers should be removed from the list of taxable items. Diapers are a necessary item for families and caretakers who have children in diapers, and the cost of these items can add up quickly. Removing the tax on diapers would provide much-needed relief to these families and help them save money so they can fully support their families and communities.

Laura Moser
Self
Dripping Springs, TX

I am Laura Moser, a constituent who lives in Hays County and I support efforts to make certain family care products more affordable and accessible to all families. Therefore, I support HB300 which would exempt certain products, including diapers, wipes, and period supplies, from sales tax.

Providing clean diapers to keep babies healthy is something that all families strive for but many struggle to provide. Organizations are helping to eliminate diaper need, but making diapers exempt from sales tax allows families to afford more diapers each month. For low-income families, this can be a significant factor that enables them to provide for their babies. As most daycare facilities require families to supply their own diapers, making diapers more affordable allows more people to join the workforce.

In addition, period supplies can be a significant expense for families, especially those with teenage girls. Women may miss school or work if they are not able to afford period supplies. This not only detrimental to them but to the community as well.

While the state would lose some revenue from the sales tax on these family care products, I believe the overall benefit to the state and our communities outweighs those losses. Everyone in our state deserves affordable access to basic necessities, including diapers and period supplies. I ask that you support HB300, and that you advocate for sale tax exemption status for certain family care products.

Kristin Hamlett
St Andrews Presybyterian Church
Austin, TX

I am writing in favor of this bill because infant care and hygiene products are necessities, in the same way that food and medicine are, but the cost is a burden for many people. I would like to see that burden reduced by exempting this purchases from taxes. Thank you.

Mary Riggs
Self
Austin, TX

I am writing to support the sales and use tax exemption for diapers and other family care items. Diapers are a necessity for parents with young children. Unlike other goods that are subject to sales tax, such as luxury items or non-essential goods, diapers are essential items that parents need to purchase for their children. Therefore, removing the sales tax from diapers can help alleviate some of the financial burdens that parents face when trying to provide for their children. Diapers are expensive. According to the National Diaper Bank Network, one in three families in the United States struggle to afford enough diapers for their children. Removing sales tax from diapers could help make them more affordable for low-income families and allow them to use the savings on other essential items.

Sales tax on diapers, maternity and breast feeding items, and feminine hygiene products disproportionately affects women. Women are more likely to be the primary caregivers for young children, and as a result, are more likely to be the ones purchasing diapers, wipes, and related products. By removing the sales tax from diapers, we can help reduce the financial burden on women and make it easier for them to provide for their children and themselves.

Removing sales tax can also have positive health outcomes. In some cases, parents may choose to reuse dirty diapers or keep their child in a soiled diaper for longer periods of time to save money. This can lead to health problems for both the child and the caregiver. Removing sales tax from diapers can help ensure that parents have access to an adequate supply of clean diapers, which can help improve the health and well-being of children and their caregivers.

Overall, removing the sales tax from diapers and other family care items can help improve the financial situation of low-income families, reduce the burden on women, and improve the health and well-being of children and their caregivers. Thank you for advancing this important issue and making Texas a more affordable and healthier place for all families.

Ryan Suneson
0123456789
Austin, TX

Texans pride themselves on helping each other. As a father I know exactly how expensive raising a child is. Making it just a little easier and more affordable to provide these necessary supplies is a no-brainer in my opinion. As a husband and father of two girls I also know that period products are a medically necessary product and should absolutely be tax exempt.

Leslie Box
Austin Diaper Bank
Dallas, TX

Please vote to make diapers and period products exempt from sales tax.

These items are as essential as food. Their cost is very high, even before taxes are added at the point of sale.

Imagine making a baby wear a soiled diaper, or a girl/woman taking toilet tissue or paper towels from a public restroom because she cannot afford sanitary napkins.

Voting for HB 300 will help many Texans.

Thank you.

Chandra Johnson, Manager
Bridges Family Resource Center
Kennedale, TX

Families struggle to pay for diapers. This bill would help families to ensure their children have diapers for home and daycare.

Sarah Risdon
For the Nations Refugee outreach
Garland, TX

Would be wonderful for all families, especially those who are struggling, to pay less for their diapers. For something so necessary for kids, for their health and happiness, it seems that the government should not profit from a need like this.

Edward Kopas
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Food Pantry
Austin, TX

Please remove the Sales Tax for diapers, wipes, and period supplies. These affect lower income folks, and they need the relief.

Doletta Prowell
Hope Supply and Bridges Resource Center
Cedar Hill, TX

There are 29 states that have a bill to not charge tax for diapers. Parents use about 50 diapers per week. By reducing the sales tax, families can buy 2 additional diapers for every percentage point reduction in the sales tax. Diapers are considered as "luxury necessities". With everything being priced so high including diapers parents need a break to assist with getting diapers for the babies.

Scrapping the diaper tax is vital, especially for people with low incomes, because children's diapers are not covered under state and federal poverty assistance programs. Assistance programs are trying to help by providing free diapers to families. Families are trying to stretch every dollar to make ends meet for the month. Families are struggling right now, with everyday expenses, increased cost in grocery stores, gas prices. Families on a budget are the ones who would benefit the most.

There are organizations that have to go and buy diapers to help but they are also taxed. We are asking for this bill to be passed to help families provide what they need for these babies.

Colleen Shirley
Self
Dallas, TX

I strongly support this bill. It would exempt sales tax on diapers for a very need population, along with other items, and would favorably impact so many lives.

Summer Mandell
Self/communications director
Austin, TX

Imagine having to decide between buying food for your family or a package of diapers for one child. This is the reality for many families across Texas. Exempting this essential product from sales tax can save a family \$87 a year. While \$87 may not seem like a lot to some, it can make it easier for a family to buy food AND a package of diapers. That money can go toward medical care, housing, and other necessities that help families thrive. I support this bill and encourage the members of this committee to send this bill forward, so our most vulnerable Texans--babies and aging adults--get support that can keep them healthy and comfortable.

Elvira Leal
Elvira's Taste of Heav'n Food Services LLC
Dallas, TX

Families needing this tax exemption

Charles Jordan
Carrington Coleman
Suite 5500, TX

I have been on the board of the largest children's diaper bank in Texas (Hope Supply Co) for four years. I strongly support passage of HB 300 as a super-targeted way to support young mothers, especially those in need, and extend their buying power for necessities. By supporting them there will be a halo health effect as well for infants. In the population below the poverty line, this support will be tremendously beneficial (and tremendously popular).

Meredith Wood
Self - homemaker/former qlawyer
Austin, TX

Taxes on these critical items disproportionately punish our most vulnerable citizens.

Susan Price
self, consultant
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Removing the sales tax from period and diapering supplies will provide a bit of much-needed financial relief to low-income families.

Michael Alberse
Hope Supply Co - Board Member
LEWISVILLE, TX

I urge the great state of Texas to exempt sales tax for the family care items in this Bill. I have served on the Board for Hope Supply Co for 10 years. Hope Supply Co serves the basic needs of homeless children in North Texas, focusing on diapers and other hygiene products. This charity distributed over 2.8 million diapers in 2022 and this still did not meet the need in the region. My involvement as a Board Member has allowed me to see first hand the struggles homeless and low income fellow Texans face to buy the needed diapers to keep our children healthy and safe. Every penny counts and tax exemption is a impactful way to help ease this financial burden.

Sylvia Campbell
self, retired
The Woodlands, TX

Dear Members of the Ways & Means Committee,

I love this bill! I believe HB 300 will be of great help to low income Texans, who are most severely affected by the sales tax. And so many of these people are women and women with children. It has been a puzzle to me that these items are taxed. They are as necessary as food and medical care. This bill will right that wrong. Please vote to pass HB 300 along to the chamber for approval.

Respectfully,
Sylvia Campbell

Jennifer Conner

self

The Woodlands, TX

I encourage this committee to consider and bring HB 300 to a vote. This bill allows personal care items to be tax exempt and this helps all families. Low income women and babies are most effected by this tax. This is a sub-group that needs these items and can be immediately helped by eliminating the tax. Please bring this bill to the House for a vote and make it Texas law.

Emily Shearer

Self-Artist

Spring, TX

Please exempt items crucial and necessary to the health of women and babies from sales tax. Give breaks where breaks are due. The laws should help and support, not cripple and punish. Thank you for your public service. I hope and pray you will vote your conscience and that you sleep well at night when you do the right thing.

Shelley Craig

Atascocita Presbyterian Church, Retired

Humble, TX

Guys, your machismo is showing. Women have rights and needs. The exemptions make sense. Pas HB 300.

Jane Chesney, Ms

Self

The Woodlands, TX

If passed, this bill will make a huge difference in the lives of many Texans. Please support it. Taxing feminine hygiene products, diapers and other infant care items is harmful and wrong.

Mary Mabry

Self-retired teacher

Spring, TX

A sales tax exemption on essentials for women and babies is urgently needed IF we want women to participate fully in school, in sports, in employment, and in communities. Women's hygiene, diapers, and nursing products are not luxuries, but are like food and medicine —essential. How can a state that claims to love families refuse to lift this tax?

Penny Bradshaw

Self

The Woodlands, TX

The high Texas Sales Tax places an outsized burden on low income citizens. I am writing in support of Representative Donna Howard's (D) Bill HB 300, which would exempt items such as tampons, sanitary pads and diapers, as well as maternity clothing, and breast pump equipment, from sales and use taxes. Sales tax contributes to "period poverty," a lack of affordable, accessible menstrual products for low-income people. Period poverty is widespread in the United States: 1 in 5 teens cannot afford menstrual products, and 84% have either missed classes in school or know someone who has missed classes due to insufficient menstrual supplies. And how is it that items like bandages and male libido enhancers are tax-exempt in Texas, but not menstrual products? Toilet paper in schools is always stocked and supplied for free. Why not tampons or pads?

And what about all of the rape and incest victims who have to provide for their babies now that abortion is no longer an option in the state of Texas? It is the least Texas can do to support those who are required to adhere to this restrictive law. Now that Texas has a HUGE glut of money in the state coffers, perhaps some of this money can be used to offset the exemption of sales tax on necessary menstrual and maternity products for women in Texas.

Texas is one of 22 states that still charges sales tax on menstrual products – let's lower that number to 21. It's inconceivable that this is the 4th time author Representative Howard, and her joint and co-authors are having to submit this bill. It's time for all committee members to say YES to HB 300 and pass this bill forward to the House for a vote in support of all Texas women.

*Note: I read with disbelief how the Fiscal Note estimated that the loss from exempting these sales taxes "must be made up with an equal amount of General Revenue to fund the Foundation School Program." How is it that certain legislators have no issue with taking educational funds for public schools and giving them to families who wish to send their children to private or religious schools, but take exception about exempting menstrual and maternity products from sales and use tax? As a resident of this state who has paid property taxes for the past 35+ years, I should not have to pay for another family's children to go to a private school. If they make that choice, they should be responsible for paying for their children's education.

Regards,

Penny Bradshaw

*"Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB300, As Introduced : a negative impact of (\$194,911,000) through the biennium ending August 31, 2025.

Additionally, the bill will have a direct impact of a revenue loss to the Tax Reduction and Excellence in Education Fund of (\$7,069,000) for the 2024-25 biennium. Any loss to the Tax Reduction and Excellence in Education must be made up with an equal amount of General Revenue to fund the Foundation School Program."

Lisa Gertsch

self

The Woodlands, TX

I completely support making the necessities listed in HB 300 sales tax exempt. How male libido enhancers are sales tax exempt, and women's tampons aren't is ridiculous. Please pass this bill. Thanks. LSG

Carolouise Ortiz, Ms.

self/retired

Montgomery, TX

Such items as diapers, feminine hygiene products, maternity clothing, and breast pump equipment are absolute necessities in the everyday life of women, girls and children. These things should be exempt from sales tax. Other items like bandages and male libido enhancers are already tax-exempt. "Menstrual health is a matter of human rights. Menstrual equity combats both 'period poverty' and stigma." Please vote to pass HB 300.

Phyllis Jones

Self

Spring, TX

I affirm the need NOT to tax female menstrual products. These are an important part of normal female bodily function and certainly NOT a luxury nor an optional item. Menstrual health is part of human rights.

If men don't pay tax on luxury items which enhance their sexual performance - why should a woman be required to pay tax on items that are necessary for their own health care??

Be equitable Texas!!

Megan Carlton

Self-teacher

Dallas, TX

Ending the sales tax on diapers will help our most vulnerable families. I volunteer with families in need and the expense of diapers is a huge to on a families budget.

Nancy Klinke

St. Vincent de Paul Conference - Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Church

Irving, TX

Our Charitable organization supplies diapers, food and toiletries to the poor and homeless in motels. It is a valuable contribution to their well-being so exempting diapers from taxes will allow us to put those funds toward rent and Electricity for the very needy.

Kayleigh McNelis

Self, attorney

Houston, TX

Everyone can benefit from the exclusion on sales tax on things like diapers and feminine hygiene products. Exempting these products from sales tax is not of the right and fair thing to do, it is essential. These products are in no way optional and keeping them taxed is highly unethical in a world where low income mothers are hit the most. You should act now on this bill.

Mariam Shahab

Self

Austin, TX

The sales tax on diapers needs to be ended in order for families to survive. Diapers are a non-negotiable for most children under 3. With the extra money families could buy more healthy food helping with their nutrition, they could put children in extracurricular activities.

Laura Weaver

retired/self

The Woodlands, TX

Please exempt family care items (such as feminine hygiene products and diapers) from being taxed. These are necessities, not frivolous items that people want to buy. Imagine being a teenaged girl and having to skip school because you don't have tampons or pads. Or getting an infection because you have used something on hand, like a paper towel or rag, instead of safe feminine hygiene product. Did you know that one in five teens cannot afford these products? Please help to make these necessities more affordable for everyone.

Elizabeth Snoddon

Self

Dallas, TX

Remove tax from none optional necessary family items

Prithikaa Sadagopan

Self - Student

Frisco, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Member,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Prithikaa Sadagopan, and I am providing comment for HB 300. I am a high school student in Frisco, TX which is in Texas House District #61.

I first learned about the term period poverty three years ago and was appalled that it was even an issue. Menstruation is not a choice, and no one should have to sacrifice basic necessities in order to be able to maintain proper menstrual hygiene. Since then, I have been an advocate for menstrual equity by leading the Girl Up club at my school. We have collected over 15,000 menstrual products to donate to people in North Texas who cannot afford menstrual products. Furthermore, I have been working to get free menstrual products available on my school campus permanently as no student should have to sacrifice their education and future simply because they do not have access to menstrual products.

Although I am lucky to be in a privileged position and not have experienced period poverty myself, I have seen how those who are affected are suffering, and I believe that HB 300 and the removal of value-added sales tax on menstrual products will alleviate at least a small portion of that suffering.

With that, I would like to once again emphasize that menstrual products are a medical necessity and should be treated as such in the state's tax code.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a public comment, and I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Sincerely,
Prithikaa Sadagopan

Kirsten Voinis

Self - communications consultant

Austin, TX

It's time for Texas to join the 17 other states that have exempted the purchase of diapers from the state sales tax. This small savings on diapers will make a huge difference for struggling Texas families. Diapers are a basic necessity for babies and Texans of all ages, not a luxury. As a longtime volunteer and supporter and former Board chair of the Austin Diaper Bank, I've heard too many stories about what happens when families don't have enough diapers – using old T-shirts as a substitute; babies and adults suffering from infections from wearing soiled diapers too long; buying diapers instead of food; missing work (and pay) because they don't have the diapers required to leave their kids at childcare. It's heartbreaking and unnecessary. As we say at the Austin Diaper Bank, changing diapers changes lives. Please help change the lives of so many Texas families by passing HB 300.

Ashley Arevalo
self
Corpus Christi, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Ashley Arevalo and I am providing comment FOR HB 300. I live in TX House District 34 which is in Nueces County, Corpus Christi].

I have been an advocate for menstrual equity since 2016 and even provided public testimony for HB 321 during last legislative session. With my non profit organization, Crimson Cause we have donated over 70,000 menstrual products to shelters and schools in the Coastal Bend. I also successfully petitioned to get free menstrual products in the restrooms at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. The tax on menstrual products that are essential to our lives is extremely unjust and makes these items more expensive than they already are. This tax directly contributes to period poverty in Texas.

I am lucky to have never experienced period poverty, but I found out that my grandma had to drop out of school since her family couldn't afford the necessities. She would often stay home during her period because she didn't want to be ridiculed.

This is how important the access to menstrual products are to people who need them. We cannot live our lives without them and the tax is just another barrier. There are similar items that are not taxed in Texas.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Sincerely,
Ashley Arevalo

Neha Chelamkuri
Code Crimson
Frisco, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. My name is Neha Chelamkuri and I am a resident of Frisco, Texas. I am writing in support of HB 300 because necessary menstrual products are currently not tax-exempt in Texas, but are in many other states. I also believe that other necessities like insulin and hearing aids should be tax-exempt to alleviate the financial burden of already-disadvantaged populations in our state.

For example, a box of tampons (tax inclusive) costs between \$7 and \$9 while the minimum wage in Texas is \$7.25, and for many low-income women and teens, these hygiene products are often forgone for other necessities. While removing the tax is only a small difference with regards to one box or pack of products, the cost adds up over time, and especially when other products such as wound care supplies and are exempt, it is a wonder that other necessary products continue to be taxed. Whether it is Texan mothers, young women, or the deaf community, necessary hygiene, medical, and other care products should be tax-exempt to support these communities. As a young woman myself, I see no reason why not to support HB 300 and reduce costs for Texas citizens. Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,
Neha Chelamkuri

Allison Aleman

self, student

Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Allison Aleman and I am providing comment FOR HB 300. I live in TX House District 50, which is in Travis County.

My whole life growing up in Texas, I never felt supported for being a woman who menstruated. I was always taught to sweep those kinds of topics under the rug. There wasn't very much education on how periods worked let alone access to menstrual products. Lucky, I was fortunate enough to where my family could afford to buy me the menstrual products that I needed, but that is not the case for everyone. Often times, this leaves vulnerable people in difficult and uncomfortable situations and it's not fair to tax a product that we need. Now going to school in San Diego, CA there are so many more services and opportunities for people who menstruate. We have tampons and pads in every single bathroom on campus, free of charge. I would love for Texas to get to that point some day, but it starts here with HB 300 and the lives that would be positively affected by removing the tax on menstruation products.

Not everyone can afford these menstrual products and period poverty is a real issue, especially among youth. People shouldn't be deciding between eating dinner and buying a box of tampons. It wasn't my choice to experience menstruation. I shouldn't be forced to pay tax for a bodily function I have no control over. Menstrual products are a medical necessity and should be treated as such in the state's tax code.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,
Allison Aleman

jessica Best
Self
AUSTIN, TX

HB 300- the tax savings on diapers will help many families with economic hardships spend more on diapers themselves vs the taxes placed on diapers. This will help infants and children who may experience diaper rash due to inability to change a diaper when necessary.

Mary Graf
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Food Pantry
Austin, TX

House Representatives', I urge you to pass legislation removing the sales tax on diapers for babies and adults, baby wipes and period related products. These items are essential daily products for families with young children, female teens, women and seniors. They are expensive and create a burden on families with limited resources. Our food pantry frequently serves families trying to meet the needs of three generations (babies, parents and grandparents). While you may not be able to reduce the cost of these essential products, removing the tax burden would go a long way to helping families stretch their limited resources. Your consideration of this important matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Mary F. Graf

Andrea Elizondo
Texas Menstrual Equity Coalition
Del Valle, TX

Good Afternoon Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony. My name is Andrea Elizondo and I am giving testimony FOR HB 300. I am representing myself. I live in TX House District 51.

I am one of the Co-Founders and Lead Organizers of the Texas Menstrual Equity Organization. I have personally witnessed the need for menstrual products increase over the last year. I have had people say grateful comments like “Thank you for providing menstrual products. I recently been laid off from my job due to COVID-19”.

I am personally connected to the issue of period poverty. I grew up in a single-parent household, which had a very limited budget. When I knew I was low on menstrual products, I made the conscious decision of using the uncomfortable period products offered at school. At least my school had a steady supply of menstrual products. Unfortunately, I know that is not the case everywhere. I have had school nurses and school social workers reach out to me to request menstrual products for their students and the requests have increased over the last year. Period poverty is a real breathing issue.

Eliminating the sales tax on menstrual products isn't eliminate the issue of period poverty but will help vulnerable communities. We also don't choose to menstruate and no one should be taxed for having a medical need. A tax on menstruation is a tax on our monthly existence.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Nicholas Polk
PERIOD.
Sugar Land, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I express my sincere gratitude for the privilege to submit my public comments on an issue of critical importance. My name is Nicholas Polk, and I am writing in support of HB 300. I reside in TX House District 76, which is situated in Sugar Land, Texas.

Over the last four years, I have been passionately advocating for menstrual equity, and my efforts have been focused on enhancing access to menstrual products. As an advocate, I collaborated with my alma mater, Sam Houston State University, and facilitated the installation of coin-free dispensers in various campus buildings.

Despite not personally experiencing menstruation, I firmly believe that individuals who menstruate should not bear the burden of paying taxes for a biological function beyond their control. Menstrual products are a medical necessity, and as such, they should be accorded commensurate treatment in the state's tax code.

Once more, I extend my appreciation for this opportunity to share my perspective. I urge you, esteemed members of the committee, to expeditiously vote in favor of HB 300, given its immense significance in promoting menstrual equity in Texas.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Polk

Lindsay Liggett
self
Austin, TX

Please consider passing HB 300! Diapers, wipes, and period products are not luxury items. They are basic healthcare necessities and expensive enough as it is. Removing the sales tax would free up funds for Texas families that are already struggling.

Michelle Tan

Self

Austin, TX

- 1 Diaper Need – 1 in 3 families, poverty, maternal depression, how it affects families, etc. – No gov't assistance -
- 2 Economic Impact of not having enough diapers for families - maternal depression, diaper rash, doctor visits.
- 3 Economic Impact of not having enough diapers for small businesses - loss of employees, diapers childcare, loss of wages, dropping out of the workforce
- 4 Positive impact of passing this bill - \$savings, \$87 average per baby, mental health, stronger families.

Isabella Fuentes

IGNITE National

Plano, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments on this crucial matter. My name is Isabella Fuentes, and I am with IGNITE National in support of HB 300. I live in TX House District 66, which is in Collin County.

I advocate for menstrual equity, and through my time as a supporter, I have coordinated bare necessities product drives in my community to give menstrual products to local women's shelters. Through my community work, I have witnessed the need for menstrual products. Menstrual products are often overlooked either because people are unaware of how a product so necessary can be so inaccessible to those who are the most vulnerable among us or because it only affects a part of the population. However, this does not make period poverty any less critical.

There are many stigmas surrounding menstruation. A vast majority of menstruators have at least once experienced the inability to fulfill their need for menstrual products, one of our most basic necessities. As a college student, I have witnessed how students ration their income in order to afford both food and menstrual products. For a long time, I relied on my parents to provide me with products, but I can now see how expensive it is to afford a regular 5-day supply. A lot of young menstruators rely on peers to obtain supplies. This is unfortunately a reality for many Texans, residents of one of the largest economies in the world who are unable to afford a medical necessity that allows them to function in their everyday lives.

It wasn't my choice to experience menstruation. I shouldn't be forced to pay tax for a bodily function I have no control over. Menstrual products are a medical necessity and should be treated as such in the state's tax code.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Sincerely,

Isabella Fuentes

Lisa Haigh

Self / self employed

Dallas, TX

Please remove sales tax for diapers. This is an essential item for families and the funds saved could go towards school supplies or fresh fruits and vegetables for a week for a family of four.

Renee La Rue

None

Conroe, TX

Please pass this exemption. These are necessary items and should not be taxed. Thank you.

Crystal Zamarron
Deeds Not Words
San Antonio, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Crystal Zamarron and I am providing comment FOR HB 300. I live in TX House District 116, which is in Bexar County.

I have been an advocate for menstrual equity for all my life as I am a person that menstruates. I have coordinated menstrual product drives in my community to give menstrual products to those in need, whether it be in school or with organizations. Menstrual products are often overlooked either because people are unaware of how a product so necessary can be so inaccessible to those who are the most vulnerable among us.

It wasn't my choice to experience menstruation. I shouldn't be forced to pay tax for a bodily function I have no control over. Menstrual products are a medical necessity and should be treated as such in the state's tax code.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Sincerely,
Crystal Zamarron

Zoe Kass
Self, student
Bellaire, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Zoe Kass and I am providing comment FOR HB 300. I live in TX House District 134 which is in Harris County.

I am a freshman at Brown University and have been advocating for menstrual equity since high school. I testified in person for HB 321 last session. Through participating in legislative advocacy work, organizing community period product drives, establishing a school-district wide free period product program, speaking with experienced Houston ISD nurses and educators, and volunteering in the Harris Health System, I have witnessed how inaccessible menstrual products are for many vulnerable Texans. These experiences have reaffirmed my belief that period product accessibility is a fundamental right and that the current sales tax on pads and tampons is discriminatory in nature.

The state should not pose an obstacle to access to health-essential supplies and should not perpetuate inequality through the undue financial burden placed on menstruators. Biological functions should not be an basis for economic discrimination.

Menstrual products are a necessity. The sales tax on menstrual products inappropriately communicates that they are not a medical necessity, when in reality, they are fundamental to personal care, well-being, quality of life, and access to education. Texas should join the national shift to abolish the Tampon Tax and prove its dedication to serving the best interests of the people.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Sincerely,
Zoe Kass

Courtney Waters
Self
Arlington, TX

Please vote to make diapers purchases tax free.

Clayton Waters

Self

Arlington, TX

This bill will provide much-needed relief to the many Texas residents that struggle to afford basic necessities for their families, especially those with infants and young children. As Texas strives to enact more Pro-Life policies, this bill should be passed to continue supporting mothers and infants in the crucial months post-partum with whatever financial relief possible so that they can find success in an extremely challenging season. Providing diapers tax-free would eliminate the painstaking process of choosing between purchasing food or purchasing diapers, purchasing a tank of gas or purchasing diapers, and reusing soiled diapers instead of purchasing brand new. This bill has the potential to reduce financial burdens and improve the quality of life for mothers and infants across the State of Texas.

Lauren Gerken

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

Austin, TX

Chair Meyer and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony on HB 300. My name is Lauren Gerken, and I am the Public Policy Analyst for the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD).

TCDD is established by state and federal law and is governed by 27 Governor-appointed board members, 60 percent of whom are individuals with developmental disabilities or family members of individuals with disabilities. The Council's purpose in law is to encourage policy change so that people with disabilities have opportunities to be fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.

The needs of Texas families are incredibly diverse and change as they develop and grow. Any family with a newborn or even a toddler will need diapers as that baby develops. However, continence care is not always limited to infancy. In fact, it can be common throughout many life stages, financially impacting families for years.

For Texas families with older children, young adults, and older adults with disabilities, having access to "an absorbent garment worn by humans who are incapable of, or have difficulty, controlling their bladder or bowel movements" is critical. Absorbent garments for individuals beyond infancy can increase an individual and families' ability to engage in community activities, family outings, therapy and doctor appointments, education, and even employment.

In addition to supporting an individual's independence and dignity and a healthier family unit, absorbent garments are just as medically necessary to prevent skin deterioration and to satisfy sanitary needs for older children and adults as they are for younger ones. Unfortunately, despite their necessity, in Texas, they are taxed at the same rate as luxury goods, with a base of 6.25%, and up to as much as 8.25%. There is currently little to no governmental assistance for diapers. They cannot be bought with SNAP benefits or WIC dollars, or covered through Medicaid or CHIP. Absorbent garments for adults are not covered by Medicare unless an individual is in a nursing home.

The caption of HB 300 reads, "relating to an exemption from sales and use taxes for certain family care items." I ask you to remember that families care for individuals of varying ages and abilities. TCDD recommends that HB 300 be updated to integrate language similar to that found in Representative Howard's HB 199, thereby broadening the parameters of "an absorbent garment" to include those worn by older children and adults. Such an amendment would better address the whole family's needs in instances where the family is caring for an adult with a disability or an aging parent.

Thank you again for considering my testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lauren Gerken

Yvette Bowling

Self

Fort Worth, TX

For parents living paycheck to paycheck, the few dollars saved on tax could be all the difference they need to make sure they have enough diapers to make it. This would keep parents from having to leave soiled diapers on their kids for too long causing infections and doctors visits.

Harlan Bowling, Mr.

Self - Software Developer

Fort Worth, TX

If the sales tax from diapers allows families in need to purchase one more pack between paychecks, then we owe it to them to help. These are the things that people care about and our politicians should care about.

Howard Conatser

Self

Mansfield, TX

For over 20 years, I have donated, volunteered and worked in Texas organization dedicated to helping vulnerable families. During this time, I have seen thousands of Texas families suffer simply because of financial burdens which are little more than \$50 per month. Jobs lost, homes lost, pain and difficulties all for the amount most families spend on streaming services or one meal eating out.

There are two worlds in Texas and one MUST support and serve and lift up the other. Please approve this exemption knowing that thousands and likely millions will have one degree more of benefit. It could make all the difference. It is the right thing to do. It is the American thing to do. Thank you.

Kelly Brown

self

Fairview, TX

I strongly support HB 300 and agree that menstrual rights are basic human rights and a health necessity and such items should NOT be taxed.

Marisa Austin

Self, Marketing Coordinator at Verdunity

Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Meyer, Vice Chairwoman Thierry, and Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. My name is Marisa Austin and I am providing comment FOR HB 300. I live in TX House District 50, which is in Austin.

From 2017-2020, before I moved to Austin, I was the founder and leader of the Denton TX chapter of Period. In the few years we were active we participated in the first National Period Day in Dallas TX, did community education and outreach, and in total donated over 10,000 period products to people in need of them. Through my community work, I have witnessed the need for menstrual products. Menstrual products are often overlooked either because people are unaware of how a product so necessary can be so inaccessible to those who are the most vulnerable among us. I have shown up for my community to fight period poverty and the stigma of menstruation but I have also had personal experience with facing period poverty. I didn't know this term existed until recently. Sometimes there wasn't enough money to buy menstrual products and food so I had to skip school or rely on the uncomfortable menstrual products available at the nurse's office.

This worsened in college, when I very often had to choose between basic hygiene and a full meal. It wasn't my choice to experience menstruation. I shouldn't be forced to pay tax for a bodily function I have no control over. Menstrual products are a medical necessity and should be treated as such in the state's tax code.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I strongly urge you to vote HB 300 out of committee soon.

Sincerely,

Marisa Austin

Preet Grewal

Self

Austin, TX

This tax is not family friendly. When parents and women can't afford basic hygiene products, not only do they suffer but their employers also pay a huge indirect cost. Policies like this also contribute to keeping women out of the workforce, which is bad for businesses.

Ali Foyt, Attorney
Texas Menstrual Equity Coalition
Houston, TX

Re: SUPPORT: House Bill 300 (88th Regular), relating to an exemption from sales and use taxes for certain family care items

Dear Chair Meyer and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

We submit this testimony in support of House Bill 300 on behalf of our client the Texas Menstrual Equity Coalition, an organization of Texans in support of menstrual equity. Because House Bill 300 advances central principles of good tax policy for the State of Texas, this Committee on Ways & Means should submit the bill to the House for consideration and recommend that it be passed.

The fundamental purpose of any sound tax system is to raise revenue for the government in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. To promote this purpose, tax systems should not unduly impede or reduce the productive capacity of participants in the economy. This principle supports current exemptions from Texas sales and use tax for numerous items necessary for Texans to productively participate in our economy, such as food and medicine. Family care items covered by this bill should be exempt from sales and use taxes for the same reason food and medicines are exempt: they are necessary for the basic wellbeing of Texans and facilitate productive participation in our economy.

Moreover, consistency and uniformity in the tax code promotes economic stability, benefitting both taxpayers and the government. A central tenant of consistent and uniform taxation is that similarly situated taxpayers should be treated similarly – a principle that is neither new nor controversial. Principles of equal taxation were reflected in the first Texas Constitution of 1845, have been adopted in each state constitution since, and are reflected in numerous provisions of the Texas Tax Code.

House Bill 300 promotes consistency and uniform treatment of similarly situated taxpayers by setting forth an express statutory exemption for feminine hygiene products and other family care items. To promote the ability of Texans to productively participate in our economy, the Texas Tax Code exempts certain health care items. The Comptroller has interpreted the Tax Code to not exempt feminine hygiene products and other family care items, resulting in a higher tax burden for Texans who menstruate or bear children. With adoption of House Bill 300, the Texas Legislature would expressly mandate that the Comptroller exempt such items from sales and use tax, thus remedying this inequity.

In furtherance of good tax policy, the Texas Menstrual Equity Coalition urges members of the Committee on Ways and Means to recommend that the House pass House Bill 300 without amendment.

Respectfully Submitted,
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

By:

Renn Neilson

Alison Andrews

Ali Foyt

Laura Shoemaker McGonagill

Kelly E. Hanen

ATTORNEYS FOR TEXAS MENSTRUAL EQUITY COALITION

karina castillo

self

Dallas, TX

Unfair to be a woman

Robert Garay
Self
Houston, TX

I am generally supportive of this legislation. However, one of the items under "family care" I did not see was blood pressure monitors. I would imagine there is a concern in making items generally expensive such as these sales tax exempt. However, for families who have a history of high blood pressure, having a daily monitor device such as these become invaluable as they consult with their doctor on the best treatment options available. I would suggest amending the legislation, if possible, to incorporate blood pressure monitors for household use as excluded from sales tax consideration. Thank you for considering my comment.

Zehra Fidan
Self - Electrical Engineer
Austin, TX

These items are crucial for well-being of children and should be made as affordable as possible.

Samantha Wiseman
self
Austin, TX

It's time to end sales tax on diapers. Every dollar counts in supporting Texas families.

Ana Horn
Bridges Can Help
Mansfield, TX

Weekly, our organization sees the consequences of parents not having the funds for diapers. To name a few:

- We see parents having to re-use 'only pee diapers' because they have run out of diapers before their next paycheck. This creates a vicious cycle of horrible diaper rash and infections, requiring doctor appointments and prescription creams and medicines.
- We see parents having to make the decision between gas for their car to get to work or a pack of diapers.
- We see parents finally land a well-paying job AND affordable childcare, only to realize the daycare requires a week's worth of diapers up front, requiring an extra \$20 a week most of these families already don't have - which puts them in the position to lose the childcare AND the job.
- We see the mental health of parents decline even more as they sink under the mental load that the stress and anxiety of the constant counting of existing diapers and the days left on the calendar before they can buy more.

For many of us who have never or who no longer have to live paycheck to paycheck, it is easy to assume a few dollars here or there won't do anything or isn't really beneficial. But for those who do, literally, every dollar counts - in this case the sales tax off of their diaper purchases. The taxes saved from a month's worth of diapers would allow another smaller pack of diapers to be purchased, which is sometimes all that is needed to make it to the next paycheck.

On behalf of the families we serve, I ask you to remember those who, for every day of every month, are intimately aware of every dollar and every cent in their bank account and how they would welcome ANY alleviation to that cycle. Those few dollars literally keep some families away from life-altering set backs. Thank you for your consideration.

Preston Horn
Self, Software Engineer
Mansfield, TX

For a state that aims to be pro-life, exempting taxes from these products should be a no-brainer decision. The products included in this bill mostly affect groups of people that are at a health disadvantage in this country. Please, please, please don't tax the people that are desperate for these basic quality-of-life needs. Let's truly put life first.

Kenneth Agnew
self
Grand Prairie, TX

For many of us who have never or who no longer have to live paycheck to paycheck, it is easy to assume a few dollars here or there won't do anything or isn't really beneficial. But for those who do, literally, every dollar counts - in this case the sales tax off of their diaper purchases. The taxes saved from a month's worth of diapers would allow another smaller pack of diapers to be purchased, which is sometimes all that is needed to make it to the next paycheck.

Thank you for your consideration

Shannon Noble, Ms.
Healing Hands Community Doula Project
Austin, TX

Healing Hands Community Doula Project supports HB 300. Many of the products added to the list of tax-exempt products by HB 300 are necessary items for pregnant women and mothers, such as maternity clothes, diapers, baby wipes, breast pumps and accessories, baby bottles and, yes, feminine hygiene products. These items are expensive additions to our clients' already-tight budgets, and reducing their net costs to mothers by even 8.25% will help. Thank you in advance for your support of this bill which seeks to support Texas mothers.

Andrea Earl, Associate State Director for Advocacy
AARP
Austin, TX

AARP is in full support of HB 300. This is an important bill for older Texans. It provides a needed tax break for older Texans who need adult diapers and are facing financial hardships.

Lisa Conatser
Self, professional counselor
Mansfield, TX

I have worked with countless individuals and families in the mental health field who wrestle with intense anxiety and depression because they can't afford basic needs for themselves or a family member. A woman should not have to choose between buying feminine products or has to get to work one day. A single parent should not have to watch their baby endure horrific diaper rashes because they can't buy new diapers. A person with diabetes should not have to choose between a meal or life saving medicine. Let's do our part in improving physical, mental and emotional health for all Americans.

Lindsey Fivecoat
self
Austin, TX

Save Texas families from paying taxes on on diapers. 1 in 3 Texas families struggles to afford diapers for their babies.

Rosa PerezRuiz

self

Del Valle, TX

Full support to lighten the load for Texas families, women, mothers and babies. To make up the difference I'd be for paying a higher sales tax on other items, i.e., alcohol, tobacco, CBD/THC products, vape products, etc.

Caroline Crocker

Deeds Not Words

richardson, TX

Dear House,

My name is Caroline Crocker and I am a student at the University of Texas at Dallas and a Campus Organizer for Deeds Not Words, and an advocate for menstrual equity. I am writing in support of House Bill 300 by Howard. The "Period Tax" is an issue that I am very passionate about, since 1 in 6 menstruating women in Texas live below the poverty line, and cannot afford menstrual hygiene products. This "period poverty" leads to people with a uterus trying to extend the usage of their menstrual products, which can lead to deadly Toxic Shock Syndrome and other illnesses. I have personally tried to address period poverty on my college campus by distributing more than 10,000 pads and tampons over the past few years in bathrooms on campus for free student use. However, the tax on these items has made my efforts much harder, since we would have been able to provide Texans on our campus with at least 825 more pads and tampons if the tax were not applied. I also volunteer with the food pantry on my college campus, and we have decided to count food and feminine hygiene products in separate categories since menstrual products are as essential as food, and no student should ever have to decide between menstrual hygiene and food. However, in Texas, it is not seen as such from a financial viewpoint. The period tax also disproportionately affects women of color and women, transgender, and non-binary Texans with lower incomes, leading to cycles of poverty. Menstruating is far from a luxury, and if we could decide, many of us would not want to do it; however, we do not have that option. Taxing menstrual hygiene as such a luxury is inherently unfair to women in Texas. HB300 seeks to address this inequity and allow women to menstruate cleanly and without additional financial burdens. I would like to conclude by thanking you for your time in reading this message and listening to why HB300 is important to me. I would also like to thank senator Howard for filing HB300 since without this bill, many Texans would continue to struggle to afford hygiene.

Serena Townsend

self

Austin, TX

Please support this bill. This is important to Texas women and families.

Caroline O'Neal
Deeds Not Words
College Station, TX

I am Caroline O'Neal from Austin, Texas, currently attending Texas A&M, and I testify in support of HB 300. The items detailed in this bill would be exempted from imposed taxes, including breast milk pumping products and feminine hygiene products - none of which are optional. When most girls reach a certain age, they begin to menstruate. This comes without warning, often without sufficient education beforehand due to Texas' existing sex-ed curriculum, and means the beginning of a lifetime of purchasing hygiene products meant to deal with this burden. There is no alternative to purchasing these products, as even the reusable alternatives, such as Diva Cup menstrual cups, are recommended to be used along with a panty liner (small pad to catch leakage). I have personally had to buy hygiene products for 8 years already, and I have a long time to go as I continue to buy them.

The same goes for breastmilk pumps, as a person who has just given birth will likely be lactating and needs to purchase products specifically made to reduce potential pains or infection due to inefficient release of breast milk.

These are both examples of the necessity that this type of product accommodates and the fact that they can often be prohibitively expensive for many people before tax is a clear sign that removing hurdles from purchasing them is necessary. Otherwise, the people who need them feel punished for meeting their most basic human needs, which is an inhumane way to treat half of the population.

Thank you.

Ella Butler
Deeds Not Words
Dropping Springs,, TX

To the House Ways and Means Committee Chair Morgan Meyer, Vice Chair Shawn Thierry, and their fellow committee members:

My name is Ella Butler. I am a student of Texas State University and the current Campus Organizer for the Deeds Not Words chapter at Texas State. I write to you as both a representative of Deeds Not Words and as an individual citizen to voice my full support of HB300. I am testifying today to strongly urge you to vote in favor of its resolution.

Prices are up across the board, and Texans are bracing themselves every time they have to reach for their wallets. Inflation is the primary concern for millions of Texas residents, and while this bill would not prevent these products from inflation-related price hikes, it would go a long way towards helping them save as much money as possible. Additionally, it would do so on items they simply cannot go without. The items exempted from sales taxes under this bill are basic necessities for millions of us— sick people need medicine, babies need diapers, and people who menstruate need sanitary products. These items, along with all others listed in HB300, are not unessential or luxurious. They are absolutely crucial to the health and safety of millions of Texans, and just as basic groceries are exempt for this reason, these items should be as well.

Additionally, half of Texas' population experiences a monthly menstrual cycle, and must spend their hard-earned money on these items firsthand. I myself spend, on average, \$25 per month on menstrual products. I am currently 21 years old. I have about 30 years, or 360 months, until I am expected to reach menopause, and will no longer need to purchase these products on a monthly basis. \$25 a month, spent over a period of 360 months, is a total expenditure of \$9,000. Those who do not experience a menstrual cycle will spend \$0 on these items for themselves. How is it equitable to tax half of our population for products that are made basic necessities by their very anatomy and physiology? These taxes, otherwise known as the "tampon tax", have been unfairly imposed on consumers for far too long, and the passing of HB300 would be a huge step toward rectifying this wrong.

It is for these reasons that I implore you all to vote in favor of HB300. Thank you for your time.

Esther Alexander, Mrs

Self, Engineer

Austin, TX

Agreed. This will help many families with the rising costs of child care/rearing a family.

Allison Johnson

Deeds Not Words

Houston, TX

Hi, my name is Allison Johnson and I am a Rice University student and a Campus Organizer for Deeds Not Words.

I strongly support the removal of the tampon tax, and I urge you to fight for this issue. Menstrual product prices are already prohibitive; it is estimated that menstruators already spend an average of \$20 per cycle. Menstrual products are undeniably a necessity, on par with toilet paper and other everyday goods that are not treated as luxury items. As a menstruator and college student, I have seen efforts on my campus to make products more accessible, offering free products at our Women's Resource Center and in our library's bathrooms. While I think these are great steps to help students with the cost of products, it is a smaller fix to the larger problem: it only extends to students, is dependent on these locations having enough products, and cannot be the sole source of products for individuals. It is important now for you to do your part to increase accessibility. Purchasing menstrual products already adds up, and I know that the removal of the tampon tax would make products that much more affordable for Texans. Please, support your constituents and remove this unnecessary added financial burden.

Remove the tampon tax today!!

Thank you,

Allison Johnson

Nancy Fermin

self

Austin, TX

I support this bill

Ashley Kudele

self

Austin, TX, TX

I support this proposed exception for sales tax on diapers, baby wipes and period products. These products are essential & the sales tax money saved by families can be put towards other essential items seeing high inflation like Milk, Eggs, and Gas.

Christabel Ketchersid

Self, Audit Director

Buda, TX

I am in full support and understand the hardship of taxing these essential family items.

Clayton Daigle

Self

Austin, TX

I fully support HB 300. Raising young children is one of the most stressful periods of life for anyone. Any small change we can make to support these families is worth it. Taxes on diapers, wipes and period products contribute to real hardship for many families in Texas. Eliminating these taxes also sends a message to Texas mothers and Texas women that the state legislature has their back.