



State Representative Donna Howard, author of HB 321, joined Paula, Sarah Campbell and two of East Dallas' youngest leaders after they testified before the Texas House Ways and Means Committee.

Paula Blackmon
HB 321 Testimony
Monday, April 19

- Good Morning and thank you all for inviting me to be here today. Chairman Meyer, it is always nice to see a fellow Dallasite in Austin and I appreciate you taking the time to hear testimony on this important issue. Thank you Vice Chair Thierry for also being here today and to another fellow Dallasite on the committee, Representative Angie Chen Button. My name is Paula Blackmon, and I am a proud East Dallas resident.
- I am here today to testify in support of HB 321 (Howard). And I am here to say that the time has come to put an end to this Gender Tax.
- I am grateful for Representative Howard's leadership on this issue and the necessary changes made in this bill which would exempt feminine hygiene products from the sales tax. It is incredibly encouraging to see bipartisan support and leadership from many members in the Dallas area delegation on this bill – which simply highlights the need for this proposed legislation.
- It is unreasonable, unconscionable, and inequitable that feminine hygiene products including tampons and sanitary napkins are subject to sales taxes. Grocery items such as food and medicine are not subject to sales tax, nor should these extremely necessary hygiene products be.
- These items are not a luxury items as the Texas Tax Code would imply – they are medically necessary, every month for decades of women's lives.
- It is estimated that [one in four women struggle financially to purchase these products](#). We know that the COVID 19 pandemic has increased financial hardship for many in our community and we should not be adding to that hardship by taxing products that are needed by women to simply live. This tax also disproportionately impacts poorer women and leaves women experiencing homelessness in an oftentimes desperate situation during their period.

- The time has come to repeal this outdated gender tax and stop punishing women financially for having their periods.
- It is for these reasons that I am here before you today testifying in support of HB 321. However, the work cannot just stop here in Austin. That's why I have been working with the City of Dallas to examine implementing a pilot program which would stock women's rest rooms in city facilities with pads and tampons. It is my intention that these hygiene products be available to any woman who finds herself in need in a public facility.
- Should the pilot program prove successful and efficacious, it would be my hope to expand it to all City of Dallas facilities, and to collaborate with Dallas County and Dallas ISD to see if we can make these products accessible in all government facilities throughout Dallas.
- This work is already being started in Dallas. I'd like to acknowledge the work being done by Tammi Kollinger and her organization "Take Charge. Period." I am also proud to have one of our local advocates here today.
- In the summer of 2020, Thylyn Moore started a chapter of PERIOD. The Menstrual Movement at Yvonne E. Ewell Magnet Center. PERIOD is a youth-run activist group started by Nadya Okamoto that fights to end period poverty and stigma through advocacy, service and education. In 2020 alone, through their many chapters, they distributed over 5 million products to menstruators in need.
- Students like Thylyn are seeing the need in our community and are stepping up to help women and girls across the country.
- Like many of you, I draw my inspiration from the youth in our communities – because it is on us to leave Texas a better place than we found it.
- Let's make Texas a better place for Texas women by repealing this senseless gender tax and making feminine products more accessible to any woman in need.