January 10, 2023

Chair Laurie Pryor
Education Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
St. Paul, MN

Dear Chair Pryor,

As the President and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, I write to express our support for HF44 which will provide students with access to menstrual products at no charge.

For 40 years, the Women's Foundation has invested more than $35 million in community investments across the state, and advanced policy to create a state where women, girls, and their families thrive. With the Center on Women, Gender, & Public Policy at the Humphrey School, we produce the state's leading research on the well-being of women and girls every two years. At WFMN, we use an intersectional equity lens to assess problems and we listen with intention to community members about their lived experiences and their ideas for solutions. In all of our work, we center and amplify the voices of communities who are most impacted by policy and, too often, least heard from in the policy arena.

No student in Minnesota should miss out on their education because they need access to menstrual products. Too often, students who cannot afford, or do not have access to, period products miss school to avoid potential embarrassment or the discomfort of having to deal with their period without supplies. Other students miss class time because when they need menstrual products, they must first get permission from a teacher to go to the nurse's office, then make the trip to a nurse's office, wait for the nurse to be available, and finally, in many schools, pay for the supplies. All of this is time away from class that would be restored if every bathroom in schools stocked these products in bathrooms as no cost to students.

Students have been leading efforts in ending period poverty in schools across the state and we applaud and lift their voices. Menstrual supplies are as basic to student bathroom hygiene as paper towels and toilet paper are, and it is past time for the state to ensure free access for these products as well.

We urge you to pass this proposal that will make a big impact in the mental health, confidence, and hygiene of students across the state.

Thank you,

Gloria Perez
CEO/President
Women's Foundation of Minnesota