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**Hygiene Products at County Facilities**

In recent years, there has been an overdue recognition that hygiene products are costly and that cost is disproportionately felt by women. Period poverty, defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education, has a disparate impact and creates an additional financial burden for those who menstruate. This includes a lack of access to sanitary products, washing facilities, and waste products. In a 2021 national survey of menstruating teens, 1 in 4 reported struggling to afford period products, up from 1 in 5 in 2019. A further 4 in 5 either missed or knew someone who missed class time because they did not have access to period products. Unfortunately, government benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) do not cover the cost of sanitary products. The cost of such products continues to remain prohibitive in part due to increasing inflation and cost of supplies. According to the Omni calculator, the average woman spends \$10 per month on period products.

The need for diapers can create similar hardships. During the pandemic, Los Angeles County saw parents and caregivers unable to access diapers for their children

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and, despite there being an adequate supply now, the financial burden remains due to these rising costs. Diaper manufacturers cited the increase in price of raw materials, shipping costs, and the need to offset inflation as reasons for this increase. Even prior to this, low-income families were spending approximately \$1,000 a year on diapers, or around 14% of their after-tax income.

Women's rights advocates are advocating up and down the state and across the nation to provide residents with free menstrual products. Their work led to an unprecedented move where, beginning next school year, grades 6 to 12, community colleges, California State universities, and Universities of California, must provide students with free feminine hygiene products. And thanks to the leadership of the California Legislature and Governor Gavin Newsom, there is no sales tax for children's diapers and feminine hygiene products for the next two years. And now, the City of Los Angeles will be piloting a program to offer feminine hygiene products at select City libraries – welcomed news.

Los Angeles County should follow suit and do more by providing free feminine hygiene products and diapers at certain venues where parents and children frequent. As Los Angeles County opens its facilities to the public following the recent COVID-19 surge, it is an opportune time to move this forward.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office, partnering with the County Library, Department of Parks & Recreation, Department of Public Social Services, County cultural venues and museums, and relevant stakeholders, to report back in 60 days on implementation of a

pilot program providing feminine hygiene products, diapers, and other personal care items at select County venues operated by the above-referenced Departments and others, including the identification of funding and a County department to administer a one-year pilot program, with a future plan for expansion if determined successful (through analysis of data collected) and ongoing funding can be identified.

2. Direct the Chief Executive Office to support federal and state legislation reducing the cost of feminine products and diapers, providing additional federal and state funding to cover the cost of providing these free products to low-income residents, and/or that would allow government benefits to cover the cost of feminine hygiene products and diapers.

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