



Erica Gilmore Prepared Remarks For Nashville Period Project Press Conference

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good Afternoon, as the chair of the Metropolitan Council of Health, Hospitals, and Social Services Committee I am honored to join Representative Brenda Gilmore, and Dr. Lakisha Simmons in the fight to change the way we think about menstruation; by ensuring that every girl has access to feminine hygiene products, we prove that they deserve a clean and safe period.

A year's supply of feminine hygiene products in the United States costs more than \$70.

Oftentimes when we think of poverty, food insecurity and homelessness come to mind. What we don't necessarily think about is the inability to afford toiletries and items such as tampons and pads – and, the reality is, people are often too ashamed or embarrassed to bring up the topic of menstrual cycles. Forty million women and girls around the world are affected by period poverty, and the silence must come to an end.

The stigma surrounding periods has been shown to directly affect a girl's potential to succeed. If a girl misses school every time she has her period, she is set 145 days behind her fellow male students. Even then, most girls in the developing world choose to drop out of school altogether rather than face the embarrassment and shame of being unprepared for their periods.

Fostering school success by implementing supportive learning environments including through raising public awareness of the impact of poverty on girls. In addition, to meeting the health needs of vulnerable and striving youth.

The Nashville Period Project initiative has taken important strides forward in elevating, addressing, key issues that cause disparities for girls from marginalized and underserved populations. Moreover, the call to action around this work has inspired philanthropic leaders, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations to continue efforts that sustain and build upon the successes achieved in improved life outcomes for girls.

With commitments from our partners and allied organizations, I am confident that the work to appropriately consider the challenges and persistent opportunity gaps faced by far too many disadvantaged, marginalized or underrepresented girls will continue. I call on the Greater Nashville community to join us in the fight to educate our girls -- period.

Thank you.

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