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Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Flr, 438 University Ave
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Minister Lecce,

Menstruation is a normal biological function experienced by half of the population. Yet for too many students in Ontario, a lack of access to menstrual products can lead to embarrassment, shame and missed days at school.

One third of Canadian women under 25 have struggled to afford menstrual products, according to a survey by Plan International Canada, and 70 per cent say they have missed school or work or have withdrawn from social activities because of their period. No one should have their learning compromised because of stigma around menstruation or because they can't afford menstrual hygiene products.

The good news is that an incredible movement has formed to break down stigma around menstrual hygiene and to end what has become known as 'period poverty.' Students have been leading the way, pushing for action at the school board level and creating networks to help distribute supplies.

You will find that students, the public and school boards are ready to take action – already three Ontario school boards have agreed to provide free menstrual supplies, including Thames Valley DSB, Waterloo Region DSB and the Toronto DSB. By the end of 2019, British Columbia will provide the products for free in all publicly-funded schools, and Nova Scotia announced in September that it will follow suit. Now it's time for Ontario to step up to meet this challenge.

In June, I tabled a motion in the House calling for the Ontario government to provide free menstrual hygiene supplies in all publicly funded schools and I urge you to adopt it without delay. I have attached a copy for your reference.

Minister, your government has a tremendous opportunity to promote menstrual health and break down barriers to education at the same time. I urge you to work with Ontario school boards to ensure these essential products are freely available to everyone who needs them.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response,

Marit Stiles
MPP for Davenport

Orders and Notices Paper

1st Session, 42nd Parliament

75. Ms. Stiles — That, in the opinion of this House, the Government of Ontario should provide free menstrual products in school washrooms in an effort to ensure no student is held back because of stigma, shame or cost in accessing menstrual products.