



# PAD THE GAP

*We bleed **together.***

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*Lower Feminine Hygiene Product Prices*

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SCOM 611

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## **Pad the Gap: Summary**

### **The Who: Message Overview**

Picture the following: Streams of blood dripping down legs. A woman crying out in despair. Have you ever been embarrassed because you didn't have a pad or a tampon? Do you know someone who has? Every day, women just like you struggle to afford a necessity: menstrual products. Women have to pay 13% more for their hygiene products than men do for masculine hygiene products.<sup>1</sup> If you care about women, then you should care about this. This is not just an economic status issue: It's a sex discrimination issue. We believe that all menstruators deserve to have equal comfort and protection. Thus, Pad the Gap would like to propose a policy that will lower the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%.

Virginia is for lovers. Let's show some love to our menstruators. We bleed together. Let's pad the gap.

### **The Why: Research Overview**

The average cost of a box of 36 tampons in Virginia is \$9.00.<sup>2</sup> By 2021, Virginia is expected to lower the tax rate for menstrual products to 1.5%.<sup>3</sup> Even with this tax reduction, however, low-income and homeless individuals are still unable to afford that \$9.00 worth of products. Thus, Pad the Gap would like to propose a policy that will lower the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%. That box of 36 tampons would move from \$9.00 to 90 cents.

### **The How: Strategies Overview**

We will utilize a variety of events and digital media to encourage individuals to support Pad the Gap. After gaining support from them, we will work with the Virginia Senate Education and Health Committee to get the policy passed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>



### **Short-Term Goals**

- Partner with organizations that support affordable menstrual prices.
- Hold hygiene product drives, presentations highlighting menstrual issues, and gimmicks such as tampon trees to raise awareness of the current issue and proposed policy.
- Post advertisements, fundraisers, and other information on Instagram and Facebook to encourage individuals to support Pad the Gap.
- Utilize paid media on television and YouTube to encourage viewers to support Pad the Gap.



### **Long-Term Goals**

- Our end goal is to lower the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%.





## **The Issue: Period Poverty**

Feminine hygiene products are defined in H.R. 1882 and AB-10 as pads and tampons that are used during the menstrual cycle.<sup>4</sup> 72% of women use pads, 75% use panty liners, and 86% use tampons.<sup>5</sup> As of 2019, women have had to pay 13% more for menstrual products than men have had to pay for their respective hygiene products.<sup>6</sup> Currently, 14 states have eliminated the tampon tax.<sup>7</sup> In Virginia, the average cost of a box of 36 tampons is \$9.00.<sup>8</sup> By 2021, Virginia will lower the tax rate for menstrual products to 1.5%.<sup>9</sup> However, low-income and homeless individuals are still unable to afford that \$9.00 worth of products. 20% of teenagers in the United States cannot afford pads or tampons.<sup>10</sup> Due to the lack of accessibility, public school students have been absent from class.<sup>11</sup> Even more startlingly, 61% of menstruators have used the same tampon for longer than recommended, which places them at higher risk for infections and toxic shock syndrome.<sup>12</sup> For poor and homeless individuals, period poverty is even more prevalent. An estimated 25 million women live below the poverty line.<sup>13</sup> Many low-income women have to choose between feeding themselves and buying feminine hygiene products. They are often forced to either use materials such as toilet paper or go without protection.<sup>14</sup> Some women have even ventured to hospitals' emergency rooms just to obtain products.<sup>15</sup> Period poverty has become even more of an issue due to the pandemic. An estimated 25% of women have been unable to afford products due to low income.<sup>16</sup>

## **Pad the Gap: Who We Are**

If you care about women, then you should care about this. This is not just an economic status issue: It's a sex discrimination issue. We believe that everyone should have equal comfort and protection during their periods. At Pad the Gap, we advocate for affordable feminine hygiene products for all menstruators, regardless of their gender, race, religion, or background. Pad the Gap proposes a policy that would decrease the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%.

Virginia is for lovers. Let's show some love to our menstruators. We bleed together. Let's pad the gap.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1882/text>

<sup>5</sup> <https://meng.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meng-unveils-bold-proposal-to-provide-menstrual-equity-to-all>

<sup>6</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>10</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study\\_n\\_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study_n_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-3f3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>



### Message Box

<p><b><u>What We Say About Us</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We believe everyone should have access to basic human rights.</li><li>• We care about all menstruators regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexuality.</li></ul>	<p><b><u>What the Opposition Says About Themselves</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We want to cut back on women's healthcare for religious reasons.<sup>17</sup></li><li>• We care about preserving the economy.<sup>18</sup></li></ul>
<p><b><u>What We Say About the Opposition</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If schools have enough money to spend on a new sports complex, they have enough money in their budgets to spend on a human necessity.</li><li>• Even with a tax cut, people still have to choose between buying food and menstrual products.<sup>19</sup> They can barely afford those products as it is, so it is unlikely that they would hoard them.</li><li>• Decreasing access to women's healthcare is sex discrimination. Which is more important to you: money or human rights?</li></ul>	<p><b><u>What the Opposition Says About Us</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lowering prices of menstrual products for students is expensive and would negatively impact our school's budget.<sup>20</sup></li><li>• If we cut taxes on menstrual products, women will abuse this and hoard the products!<sup>21</sup></li></ul>

<sup>17</sup> <https://19thnews.org/2020/10/biden-trump-election-health-care/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/703687071/tampon-tax-repeal-benefits-women-but-comes-at-a-cost-to-states>

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study\\_n\\_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study_n_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4)

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.brawns.org/raising-awareness.html>

<sup>21</sup>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/feb/14/tennessee-republicans-worry-women-will-go-on-tampon-buying-frenzy>



## **Backgrounder**

H.R. 1882 defines feminine hygiene products as pads and tampons that are used during the menstrual cycle.<sup>22</sup> Period poverty, which describes women's inability to afford menstrual products, is a prevalent issue in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

## **Research**

- 72% of women in the United States use pads, 75% use panty liners, and 86% use tampons.<sup>24</sup>
- In Virginia, it costs up to \$9.00 for one box of 36 tampons. Women will, on average, spend \$2,000 on tampons throughout their lifetimes.<sup>25</sup>
- The following states have no tax on feminine hygiene products: California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah.<sup>26</sup>
- Virginia is expected to lower the tax rate of feminine hygiene products to 1.5% by 2021.<sup>27</sup>
- Women pay 13% more money for feminine hygiene products than men do for masculine hygiene products.<sup>28</sup>
- One-fifth of teenage girls in the United States cannot afford pads and tampons.<sup>29</sup>
- 25 million women in the United States live below the poverty line.<sup>30</sup>
- Period poverty has become more troublesome due to people's lack of income during the pandemic.<sup>31</sup>
- Menstrual Hygiene Management Day is on May 28. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness of the struggles women are faced with during menstruation.<sup>32</sup>
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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1882/text>

<sup>23</sup> <https://news.wttw.com/2019/11/20/women-forced-choose-between-food-and-menstrual-products>

<sup>24</sup>

<https://meng.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meng-unveils-bold-proposal-to-provide-menstrual-equity-to-all>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>27</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>28</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>29</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>30</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>31</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olzif67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.globalwaters.org/menstrual-hygiene-management-day>



## **Questions & Answers**

**Q:** What qualifies as a feminine hygiene product?

**A:** Feminine hygiene products are defined in H.R. 1882 and AB-10 as pads and tampons that are used during the menstrual cycle.<sup>33</sup>

**Q:** What is period poverty?

**A:** Period poverty describes how women need feminine hygiene products but do not have the income to obtain them.<sup>34</sup>

**Q:** What is toxic shock syndrome?

**A:** Toxic shock syndrome is a deadly complication caused by infections.<sup>35</sup> A major risk factor for TSS is using a tampon for longer than the recommended time period.<sup>36</sup> This risk is especially for low-income individuals who cannot afford many menstrual products.<sup>37</sup>

**Q:** How much do feminine hygiene products cost in Virginia?

**A:** In Virginia, the average cost of a box of 36 tampons is \$9.00.<sup>38</sup>

**Q:** Does the affordability of menstrual products only affect women?

**A:** The affordability of menstrual products also affects transgender men. In some cases, since transgender individuals can experience high levels of poverty, lack of accessibility can be even worse for them.<sup>39</sup>

**Q:** Why does all of this matter?

**A:** Feeling clean and comfortable is a basic human right. If toilet paper keeps us clean and is considered a necessity, then menstrual products should also be considered as such. Human rights are not a luxury.

**Q:** Why do you only want to lower menstrual product prices by 90%? Why not make them free?

**A:** We suspect that people who highly value the economy will be more likely to support our proposed policy change if menstrual products still cost something.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1882/text>

<sup>34</sup> <https://news.wttw.com/2019/11/20/women-forced-choose-between-food-and-menstrual-products>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20355384>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/transgender-men-pain-menstruation-more-just-physical-n1113961>



## **Myths & Realities**

**Myth:** The pandemic hasn't affected the affordability of menstrual products.

**Reality:** The pandemic has lessened the affordability of menstrual products. 25% of women have been unable to afford products in 2020 due to low income caused by the pandemic.<sup>40</sup>

**Myth:** I don't menstruate, so the affordability of menstrual products doesn't affect me.

**Reality:** It might not affect you directly, but imagine if your friend, family member, or significant other couldn't afford menstrual products. Low-income and homeless individuals are often forced to turn to toilet paper or diapers.<sup>41</sup> Imagine if that was your friend or sister. You would feel so guilty and ashamed seeing them struggle with pain and embarrassment.

**Myth:** Conservatives/Republicans are against menstrual equity, right?

**Reality:** Actually, that is incorrect. As of 2019, 85% of Republican voters and 94% of Democratic voters are supportive of free menstrual products for prisoners.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study\\_n\\_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study_n_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/tampon-tax-republican-democrat-opinion-1391763>



### **Talking Points**

1. Menstruators of all economic statuses deserve equal access to feminine hygiene products.

Lowering menstrual product prices would enable low-income individuals to afford a necessity which they have long been denied.

2. All menstruating students deserve an effective education.

Public school students often miss class due to a lack of access to feminine hygiene products.<sup>43</sup> Lowering menstrual product prices would increase their in-class time and chances for educational success.

3. Women deserve to be treated as equally as men.

Feminine hygiene products cost 13% more than male hygiene products. Lowering menstrual product prices would be one step towards closing the gender inequality gap.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>44</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>



### Hill Letter

Considering that we will be communicating with the Senate of Virginia and not necessarily the U.S. Senate, this letter will be sent to the office of the Senate of Virginia.<sup>45</sup>

The Hon. Clara Barnhardt  
Senate of Virginia  
P.O. Box 396  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Senator Ghazala,

My name is Clara Barnhardt, and I am the head of Pad the Gap, an organization seeking to lower the prices of menstrual products in Virginia. 25% of menstruators are struggling to obtain feminine hygiene products due to the pandemic.<sup>46</sup> We believe that all menstruators deserve access to affordable period products. For this reason, we are proposing a policy that would lessen menstrual product prices in Virginia by 90%. We recognize that you view women's healthcare as an important issue. Thus, Pad the Gap would be honored to have you sponsor our proposed policy change. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at:

*Phone:* 804-577-7706

*Email:* [cnb395@gmail.com](mailto:cnb395@gmail.com)

*Mailing Address:* 23 South Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Sincerely,

Clara Barnhardt

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<sup>45</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/districtlist.php>

<sup>46</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>



### **Proposed Hearing Questions**

25% of women in the United States are experiencing period poverty due to the pandemic.<sup>47</sup> Will the number of people experiencing period poverty change after the pandemic?

- Some people may find jobs quickly, but it is suspected that it will take a long time for others to find jobs.<sup>48</sup> Due to this, the number of people experiencing period poverty will likely decrease, but not by much. Thus, we believe that it is important to improve the period poverty issue as swiftly as possible.

Why would your policy only decrease menstrual product prices by 90%? Why not just make them free?

- Part of the opposition is concerned that making menstrual prices free will negatively affect other aspects of the economy.<sup>49</sup> We are not making them completely free to appeal to that opposition.

How will this policy help menstruators who don't identify as female?

- Making menstrual products more accessible will also help transgender men and non-binary individuals. Many transgender men and non-binary individuals experience especially high levels of poverty.<sup>50</sup> While our policy won't solve problems such as anti-transgender violence and discrimination, it is our hope that making products more accessible will help with some of the psychological troubles these individuals face.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/19/22-jobs-at-high-risk-of-slow-recovery-after-the-coronavirus-pandemic.html>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/703687071/tampon-tax-repeal-benefits-women-but-comes-at-a-cost-to-states>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/transgender-men-pain-menstruation-more-just-physical-n1113961>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.





### **Summary of Legislative and Political Environment**

In terms of the United States, Grace Meng is working to make menstrual products accessible to all students, incarcerated individuals, homeless individuals, and menstruating employees.<sup>52</sup> As of 2020, 14 states have no tax on menstrual products: California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah.<sup>53</sup> Bills such as AB-10 in California have passed, requiring free products in school restrooms.<sup>54</sup> The Code of Virginia currently requires schools to have accessible feminine hygiene products for students.<sup>55</sup> Other bills such as SB 231, which would remove the tax on menstrual products altogether, have failed to pass.<sup>56</sup> As of December 2020, while there are people who oppose legislation supporting the decrease of menstrual product tax rates, there is no directly competing legislation.

Supporters of accessible menstrual products include BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters), Helping Women Period, and Period Equity. Opposition include the Tax Foundation, many school superintendents, and Donald Trump supporters who are against women's rights. Position drivers include Grace Meng, Brenda Gilmore, Jennifer Boysko, Mark Keam, Jennifer McClellan, and Ghazala Hashmi. All of these position drivers are currently in office and support women's healthcare. We will connect with the Virginia Senate Education and Health Committee due to their focus on healthcare-related issues. Additionally, since lowering menstrual product prices seems to be popular with Democrats, it is our hope that the higher number of Democrats on the Committee compared to Republicans will increase our chances of support.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1882>

<sup>53</sup> <https://fsastore.com/learn/feminine-care-fsa>

<sup>54</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB10](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB10)

<sup>55</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB232>

<sup>56</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>



### **Existing Law Analysis**

Several pieces of legislation that promote accessible menstrual products exist in other states. Here are a few examples:

#### **AB-10 - Feminine hygiene products: public school restrooms**<sup>57</sup>

AB-10 was first introduced in 2017 by Cristina Garcia and went into effect on January 1, 2018.<sup>58</sup> The new law requires all California public schools with students from sixth to twelfth grades to have at least half of their bathrooms stocked with free feminine hygiene products.

#### **Bill H.565**<sup>59</sup>

Bill H.565 would require all public schools in Massachusetts to provide free menstrual products. As of February 2020, it has not been voted on by the Massachusetts House or Senate.<sup>60</sup>

According to current Virginia law:

#### **SB 232 - Menstrual supplies; school boards shall make available in each school building**<sup>61</sup>

SB 232, which would require all school boards in Virginia to make menstrual products accessible to students, was proposed by Jennifer Boysko in 2020. It was approved on April 6, 2020 and added to the Code of Virginia. According to the current Code of Virginia, school boards are required to make feminine hygiene products accessible for students.

In Virginia, other bills have been introduced but have not fully passed:

#### **SB 231 - Retail Sales and Use Tax; exemption for menstrual supplies**<sup>62</sup>

Jennifer Boysko introduced SB 231 in 2020. If it had passed, it would have removed the tax on menstrual products in Virginia. It did not pass through the House of Representatives.

Policymakers are also working on making menstrual products accessible for all in the United States:

#### **H.R. 1882 - Menstrual Equity for All Act of 2019**<sup>63</sup>

<sup>57</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB10](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB10)

<sup>58</sup> <http://empirecleaningsupply.com/ab-10-feminine-hygiene-products-public-school-restrooms-what-you-need-to-know/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/191/H565/BillHistory>

<sup>60</sup>

<https://www.wcvb.com/article/bill-making-its-way-through-state-house-would-require-massachusetts-schools-to-offer-free-menstrual-products/30946379>

<sup>61</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB232>

<sup>62</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1882>



On March 26, 2019, Grace Meng proposed the Menstrual Equity for All Act of 2019, which would make feminine hygiene products more accessible to menstruating students, menstruating employees, incarcerated people, and homeless individuals in the United States. As of May 3, 2019, H.R. 1882 is still in the introductory stage and has not yet passed through the House of Representatives.



### **Competing Legislation**

Bills such as SB 231 have failed<sup>64</sup>, and there has been some opposition from school superintendents.<sup>65</sup> However, there is no directly competing legislation in Virginia as of December 2020. It is our hope that this will make it easier to pass our policy.

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<sup>64</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.braws.org/raising-awareness.html>



## **Supporters**

### **BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters)**<sup>66</sup>

BRAWS supports and advocates for accessible menstrual products and girls' undergarments. For instance, they supported Jennifer Boysko and Mark Keam's 2018 bill that would have provided free menstrual products in schools across Virginia.<sup>67</sup> For these reasons, it is likely that they would support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

### **Helping Women Period**<sup>68</sup>

Helping Women Period works to provide menstrual products to homeless and low-income individuals. Their website offers ways supporters can volunteer at their events and donate money and products. They also run a blog that provides information and resources about the menstrual cycle, events they hold, and their team members. For these reasons, it is likely that they would support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

### **Period Equity**

Period Equity works with nonprofit organizations, attorneys, scientists, and journalists to advocate for safe, accessible, and affordable menstrual products. On their website, they offer a link to join the Tampon Tax Protest, a campaign that aims to fully remove the tax on feminine hygiene products.<sup>69</sup> For these reasons, it is likely that they would support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.braws.org/>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.braws.org/raising-awareness.html>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.helpingwomenperiod.org/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.taxfreeperiod.com/protest>



## **Opposition**

### **Tax Foundation**

The Tax Foundation, which studies tax policies, is concerned that cutting tampon taxes would negatively affect other aspects of the economy.<sup>70</sup> Thus, they will be likely to oppose the proposed policy change.

### **School Superintendents**

Much of the opposition towards free menstrual products in schools comes from school superintendents. For instance, on January 25, 2018, Jennifer Boysko spoke in support of a bill that would provide free menstrual products in schools.<sup>71</sup> Fairfax County Public Schools superintendents were concerned that this would take \$50,000 out of their budget.<sup>72</sup>

### **Trump Supporters**

During Donald Trump's presidency, the Trump Administration has threatened various aspects of women's healthcare, including cutting the Affordable Care Act's abortion and contraceptive coverage.<sup>73</sup> There is no question that Trump holds discriminatory views towards women. Despite the results of the 2020 election, Trump supporters will still exist, and many of those supporters will likely oppose legislation that makes women's lives easier.

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/703687071/tampon-tax-repeal-benefits-women-but-comes-at-a-cost-to-states>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.braws.org/raising-awareness.html>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/09/10/490241/women-paid-price-trumps-regulatory-agenda/>



## **Position Driver Analysis**

### **Grace Meng**<sup>74</sup>

Queens, New York Representative Grace Meng is the first Asian American Congresswoman and the second female Congresswoman from Queens. After obtaining her degree in law from Yeshiva University, she served as a member of the New York State Assembly. She has passed several laws, including protections for military veterans and children. Additionally, she represents and supports women, people of color, and small businesses.

On March 26, 2019, she proposed the Menstrual Equity for All Act, which would make feminine hygiene products more accessible to menstruating students, menstruating employees, incarcerated people, and homeless individuals.<sup>75</sup> As of May 3, 2019, H.R. 1882 is still in the introductory stage and has not yet passed through the House of Representatives.<sup>76</sup> Due to her proposal of a bill that would increase accessibility of products for individuals, she would support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

### **Brenda Gilmore**<sup>77</sup>

Brenda Gilmore is a Democrat Senator for the state of Tennessee. She is a member of the Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee; Senate Transportation and Safety Committee; Joint Fiscal Review Committee; and Joint Pensions and Insurance Committee. In addition to being a former General Assembly House member, she has also been involved in several community-based organizations, including League of Women Voters, Women in the Numbers, and Top Ladies of Distinction. Notably, she was the President of National Hook-Up of Black Women, the Director of Women in Government, and the President of Women's Network. She has received many awards, including induction into the YWCA Women of Achievement Academy and the Excellent Public Services award, which was given by the Tennessee Economic Council of Women. Based on her community involvement, it is clear that she represents women.

In September of 2018, Gilmore, along with her daughter and Belmont Professor Lakisha Simmons, launched the Nashville Period Product Challenge.<sup>78</sup> The project, which ran until the end of the month, was successful in providing schools in Nashville, Tennessee with free menstrual products and raising awareness of period poverty in Tennessee.<sup>79</sup> Due to Gilmore's care for women and her major role in this project, it is likely that she would support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

### **Jennifer Boysko**<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> <https://meng.house.gov/about>

<sup>75</sup> <https://meng.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/meng-unveils-bold-proposal-to-provide-menstrual-equity-to-all>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/congress/house/bills/1882>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/senate/members/s19.html>

<sup>78</sup>

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2018/08/29/feminine-care-product-drive-nashville/1111630002/>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.jenniferboysko.com/>



Jennifer Boysko is a Democrat Senator representing the 33rd district of Virginia. She is a member of the Transportation Committee, General Laws and Technology Committee, and Social Services Committee. She served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 2014 to 2019 and was elected to the Virginia Senate in 2019. Both during her time as a Delegate and as a Senator, she has supported education, equality, technological advancement, women's rights, and renewable energy. In terms of women's rights, she supports pro-choice abortion, Planned Parenthood, and affordable menstrual products. She was endorsed by several elected officials, including Tim Kaine, Mark Warner, Terry McAullife, Mark Herring, Gerry Connolly, and, notably, Ralph Northam.

SB 232, which would require all school boards in Virginia to make menstrual products accessible to students, was proposed by Jennifer Boysko in 2020.<sup>81</sup> It was approved on April 6, 2020 and added to the Code of Virginia.<sup>82</sup> According to the current Code of Virginia, school boards are required to make feminine hygiene products accessible for students.<sup>83</sup> Due to Boysko's support of accessible menstrual products, she would likely support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

#### **Mark Keam**<sup>84</sup>

Mark Keam is a member of the Virginia House of Delegates representing Fairfax County. He is a member of several committees, including the House Commerce and Labor Committee, Finance Committee, Education Committee, and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee. He is experienced in business and law, and he has worked with many nonprofit organizations. He serves on many organizational boards, including Virginia Literacy Foundation, University of Virginia's Thomas C. Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership, and Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum, to name a few. Other organizations he is involved with include He has received many awards during the past several years, including Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Education Association, and The Sierra Club. He represents immigrants, minority groups, children, and students.

Keam is a supporter of menstrual equity, particularly in the education system.<sup>85</sup> He co-sponsored Jennifer Boysko's bill #HB1434, which would provide students with free menstrual products in school restrooms.<sup>86</sup> Due to his support for women and students and his close affiliation with Boysko, he would likely support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

#### **Jennifer McClellan**<sup>87</sup>

Jennifer McClellan was a member of the House of Delegates representing Richmond, Virginia for 11 years and a member of the Virginia Senate for 4 years. In total, she has been a

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<sup>81</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB232>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> <https://markkeam.com/?q=about>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.braws.org/raising-awareness.html>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.jennifermcclellan.com/>





legislator for 14 years. In 2021, she is running for Governor of Virginia. She has been endorsed by several individuals, including Senator Ghazala Hashmi, Senator Jennifer Boysko, Senator Mamie Locke, and more. She has created and passed several pieces of legislation, including but not limited to the Clean Economy Act, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, the Reproductive Health Protection Act, and ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. Issues she cares about include education, inclusivity, affordable health care, criminal justice reform, climate change, and reduction of gun violence. She mainly represents women and people of color as her constituencies. This is especially evident given that she was the first House member to be pregnant during her time in office.

She advocates for affordable healthcare, particularly regarding women's reproductive rights. She was one of the primary individuals to advocate for the Reproductive Health Protection Act. Due to her passion and care for women's health care, she would be a major asset to Pad the Gap, especially considering her Governor of Virginia candidacy.

### **Ghazala Hashmi**<sup>88 89</sup>

Ghazala Hashmi is a Democrat Senator representing District 10 of Virginia. Issues she cares about include education, affordable healthcare, mental health services, environmental issues, worker protections, and food security. In 2020, she passed 13 bills, including SB 404, which protects consumers' healthcare insurance and SB 910, which added more English Language Learner teachers to all school districts in Virginia. She moved to America with her family as a child and is the first Muslim-American woman to serve in the Virginia Senate.

Notably, she was endorsed in 2019 by NARAL Pro-Choice, an organization that advocates for women's reproductive rights.<sup>90</sup> Since she cares about affordable healthcare and women's reproductive rights, she would likely support Pad the Gap's proposed policy change.

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<sup>88</sup> <https://ghazalahashmi.com/> (\*Note: Source became unavailable after completing research.)

<sup>89</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Ghazala\\_Hashmi](https://ballotpedia.org/Ghazala_Hashmi)

<sup>90</sup>

<https://naralva.org/2019/05/16/naral-pro-choice-virginia-announces-endorsement-ghazala-hashmi-virginias-10th-state-senate-district/>



### **Key Committee Analysis**

It would be most beneficial to focus on the Virginia Senate Education and Health Committee. The Education and Health Committee focuses on issues related to elementary, secondary, and college education and healthcare-related issues.<sup>91</sup> For instance, SB 917, which would require health benefit plans to cover reproductive health-related issues, is currently pending in the Education and Health Committee.<sup>92</sup> For the 2021 session, they will meet on Thursdays at 8:00 a.m. in Senate Room A at the Pocahontas Building.<sup>93</sup> Membership for the 2021 session includes Louise Lucas, Richard Saslaw, Janet Howell, Stephen Newman, Mamie Locke, George Barker, J. Chapman Petersen, John Cosgrove, Jr., Lynwood Lewis, Jr., Siobhan Dunnavant, David Suetterlein, Mark Peake, John Edwards, Benton Chafin, and Ghazala Hashmi. In total, there are 9 Democrats and 6 Republicans.<sup>94</sup> Since lessening the prices of menstrual products seems to be primarily a Democrat-supported issue, having more Democrats on the Committee will hopefully be to our advantage.

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<sup>91</sup> <https://legiscan.com/VA/pending/senate-education-health-committee/id/163?chamber=senate>

<sup>92</sup> <https://legiscan.com/VA/bill/SB917/2021>

<sup>93</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?211+com+S4>

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



## **Coalitions and Partners**

### **BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters)**<sup>95</sup>

BRAWS is an advocacy organization based in Vienna, Virginia that provides menstrual supplies and undergarments to women and girls in shelters. Additionally, they have installed free product dispensers in more than 15 schools in Virginia. They advocate for accessible menstrual products and girls' undergarments.

The organization's address is [info@brows.org](mailto:info@brows.org). First, we will send an email asking for their support and partnership. Then, we will send follow-up emails as needed.

### **Helping Women Period**<sup>96</sup>

Helping Women Period works to provide menstrual products to homeless and low-income individuals. Their website offers ways supporters can volunteer at their events and donate money and products. They also run a blog that provides information and resources about the menstrual cycle, events they hold, and their team members.

Helping Women Period's phone number is +1-517-295-0552, and their address is  
P.O. Box 4544  
East Lansing, MI 48826.<sup>97</sup>

We will start by calling their phone number and sending them a letter asking for their support and partnership. We will send additional calls and letters as needed.

### **Period Equity**<sup>98</sup>

Period Equity works with nonprofit organizations, attorneys, scientists, and journalists to advocate for safe, accessible, and affordable menstrual products. On their website, they offer a link to join the Tampon Tax Protest, a campaign that aims to fully remove the tax on feminine hygiene products.<sup>99</sup>

Jennifer Weiss-Wolf and Laura Stausfeld are the co-founders of Period Equity. Their emails are [jennifer@periodequity.org](mailto:jennifer@periodequity.org) and [laura@periodequity.org](mailto:laura@periodequity.org). First, we will send emails to both addresses asking for their support and partnership. Then, we will send follow-up emails as needed.

### **The Achiever Academy**<sup>100</sup>

The Achiever Academy is a Tennessee-based nonprofit organization that works to foster leadership and professional skills in young girls and women. They run The Period Project

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.brows.org/>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.helpingwomenperiod.org/>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.helpingwomenperiod.org/contact/>

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.periodequity.org/>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.taxfreeperiod.com/protest>

<sup>100</sup> <https://periodprojectnashville.com/how-to-be-successful-in-college-career/>



Nashville, which works to provide low-income and homeless individuals with feminine products and raise awareness about period poverty.<sup>101</sup>

The organization's email address is [hello@theachiever.me](mailto:hello@theachiever.me).<sup>102</sup> In addition, Lakisha Simmons, one of the organization's heads, has a personal website where she can be contacted: <https://www.lakishasimmons.com/contact>. We will first send an email and follow-up emails to [hello@theachiever.me](mailto:hello@theachiever.me) asking for The Achiever Academy's support and partnership. If needed, we will contact Simmons personally through the page.

If the organizations choose to partner with Pad the Gap, they will give support and assist us with confirming potential events, gimmicks, and media. Additionally, they will provide inspiration for new events, gimmicks, and media that we may not have thought of before. Considering the organizations' successes, their guidance will be important to Pad the Gap's achievement.

To preserve the safety of members of our partners during the pandemic, we plan on mainly connecting with them through technological means, such as emails, video chats, and social media. Communication through technological means will also serve us and them well, considering the wide range of physical locations of the organizations.

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<sup>101</sup> <https://periodprojectnashville.com/lakishasimmons-period-project-nashville/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://periodprojectnashville.com/contact/>



### **Budget**

<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage of Budget</u></b>
Paid Media	50%
Fundraising Merchandise	15%
Staff Payment	15%
Transportation to and from Events	10%
Event and Gimmick Materials	10%

Due to the pandemic, all meetings within the organization and with partners will take place through technological means. Thus, a physical headquarters is not included in our budget.



### Fundraising Plan

1. We will have a link to merchandise interested donors can purchase in our social media bios. Here are some examples of potential merchandise:

	<p>A pouch for your hygiene products! (Consider giving some of those products to people in need.)</p>
	<p>A t-shirt, so you too can support affordable menstrual products!</p>

2. In addition to our merchandise link, we will have another link in our social media bios where supporters can donate money.

3. We will also send out fundraising letters and emails to potential donors. Since everyone is either a menstruator or knows a menstruator, in general, we will be sending letters and emails to a variety of potential donors. In terms of a more specific target audience, we feel that it would be beneficial to focus on young adults. Our reasoning behind this is that menstruation-related issues seem to be more popular with the younger generation, particularly on social media.



## Fundraising Letter

Clara Barnhardt  
Pad the Gap  
23 South Ave.  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
Phone: 804-577-7706  
Email: cnb395@gmail.com

[Send Date]

[Name of Potential Donor]  
[Potential Donor's Address]  
[Potential Donor's Contact Information]

Dear [Name of Potential Donor],

My name is Clara Barnhardt, and I am the head of Pad the Gap, an organization aiming to decrease the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia. Every day, menstruators just like you, your friend, or your family member struggle to afford menstrual supplies. You can help make a difference in their lives by supporting Pad the Gap through donations:

[Fundraising links]

Together, we can build a brighter future for women in Virginia. Please reach out to our phone or email if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Clara Barnhardt



## Calendar

<u>Week Of</u>	<u>Goals for Month</u>
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contact Senator Ghazala</li> <li>● Contact potential partners               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meet with partners through Zoom (monthly)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Contact Richmond Times Dispatch</li> <li>● Create Pad the Gap Facebook and Instagram pages</li> <li>● Create earned media advertisements to use on our Facebook and Instagram pages</li> <li>● Set up fundraising merchandise page and link</li> <li>● Create and post the two fundraising links in Facebook and Instagram bios</li> <li>● Post on Facebook and Instagram (weekly and ongoing - according to the schedule on <i>page 29</i>)</li> <li>● Post earned media advertisements to Facebook (ongoing - according to the schedule on <i>page 29</i>)</li> </ul>
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Send fundraising letters to potential donors</li> <li>● Send fundraising emails to potential donors</li> <li>● Feminine Hygiene Product Drive #1</li> <li>● Feminine Hygiene Product Drive #2</li> <li>● Tampon Tree #1 - Williamsburg, VA               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Purchase materials</li> <li>○ Hang the tampons on trees</li> <li>○ Stream through Facebook Live</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Connect with Effectv to create and run paid media advertisement</li> <li>● Meet with partners through Zoom (monthly)</li> </ul>
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hire a YouTube advertiser to create paid media advertisement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Once advertisement is created, upload to YouTube and begin YouTube ad campaign</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Tampon Tree #2 - Charlottesville, VA</li> <li>● Track fundraising merchandise orders and funds donated (ongoing)</li> <li>● Order fundraising merchandise (ongoing)</li> <li>● Ship fundraising merchandise to donors (ongoing)</li> <li>● Meet with partners through Zoom (monthly)</li> </ul>
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feminine Hygiene Product Drive #3</li> <li>● Feminine Hygiene Product Drive #4</li> <li>● Tampon Tree #3 - Richmond, VA</li> <li>● Meet with partners through Zoom (monthly)</li> </ul>
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feminine Hygiene Product Drive #5</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Send thank-you letters and emails to donors (ongoing)</li><li>• Prepare three presentations for virtual Menstrual Hygiene Management Day event</li><li>• Host virtual Menstrual Hygiene Management Day presentations (May 28, 2021)</li></ul>
June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hill Blitz (<i>page 37</i>)</li></ul>

\**Ongoing* means through June.



## **Social Media Plan**

### **Instagram**

Since Instagram seems to be especially popular with young adult girls, it would be an effective platform for encouraging them to donate. In our bio, we will have two links: One where supporters can donate money, and another where they can purchase fundraising merchandise. Every week from Monday through Friday, we will post earned media and information about events. We will upload one post a day in the following order:

<b><u>Monday</u></b>	<b><u>Tuesday</u></b>	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b>	<b><u>Thursday</u></b>	<b><u>Friday</u></b>
Earned Media Image	Event Information	Event Information	Text Post	Earned Media Image

All posts will have donation links in their captions. During weeks when events are especially relevant, we will post more frequently about those events.

### **Facebook**

Facebook would allow us to reach donors of all ages. In our bio, we will have two links: One where supporters can donate money, and another where they can purchase fundraising merchandise. Every week from Monday through Friday, we will post earned media and information about events. We will upload one post a day in the following order:

<b><u>Monday</u></b>	<b><u>Tuesday</u></b>	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b>	<b><u>Thursday</u></b>	<b><u>Friday</u></b>
Earned Media Image	Event Information	Event Information	Text Post	Earned Media Image

All posts will have donation links in their captions. During weeks when events are especially relevant, we will post more frequently about those events.

We will also utilize Facebook Live to stream gimmicks such as The Tampon Trees. This will ensure that we gain the most attention possible.



## **Potential Events**

**1. Feminine Hygiene Product Drives:** Gilmore and Simmons' Nashville Period Product Drive was effective in raising awareness about period poverty in Tennessee.<sup>103</sup> Thus, we believe that it would be beneficial to hold our own feminine hygiene product drives to raise awareness and promote our policy. We will hold multiple drives in several major cities in Virginia. Due to limitations caused by the pandemic, we will have both product drop-off boxes and donation links through social media posts.

**2. Menstrual Hygiene Management Day Presentations:** Menstrual Hygiene Management Day occurs on May 28.<sup>104</sup> On Menstrual Hygiene Management Day, Pad the Gap will hold a series of three virtual Zoom presentations highlighting the menstrual issues women are faced with. A Zoom link will be provided on our social media pages.

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<sup>103</sup>

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2018/08/29/feminine-care-product-drive-nashville/1111630002/>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.globalwaters.org/menstrual-hygiene-management-day>



### **Proposed Gimmicks**

**1. The Tampon Trees:** We will hang hundreds of tampons on trees in three of Virginia's major cities. Each tampon will represent one person who can't afford to purchase feminine hygiene products. Each "tree-decorating" will take place on separate days, and each of these days will be three weeks apart. Videos of these events will be streamed to Facebook Live to ensure that they receive the most attention possible.



### **Outreach Email**

Dear [Name of Potential Donor],

My name is Clara Barnhardt, and I am the head of Pad the Gap, an organization aiming to decrease the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia. Every day, menstruators just like you, your friend, or your family member struggle to afford menstrual supplies. You can help make a difference in their lives by supporting Pad the Gap through donations:

[\[Fundraising links\]](#)

Together, we can build a brighter future for women in Virginia. Please respond to this message or reach out to 804-577-7706 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Clara Barnhardt



## **Paid Media Plan**

### **Television Advertising**

1. First, we will work with Effectv to plan and create an effective television advertisement.<sup>105</sup>
2. We will utilize the Effectv Ad Planner<sup>106</sup> to purchase ad spaces in Virginia that will give our advertisement the most attention possible. Preferably, since the Senate of Virginia is located in Richmond<sup>107</sup>, it would be helpful to have ad space around that area.
3. According to YouGov, the 10 most popular TV networks among women as of 2018 are Netflix, Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, PBS, Animal Planet, History Channel, Food Network, The Weather Channel, Nickelodeon, and A&E.<sup>108</sup> While we will attempt to run the ad on most of these networks, since there is a PBS station located directly in Richmond<sup>109</sup>, this will be the main channel we target.

### **YouTube Advertising**<sup>110</sup>

In the past several months, YouTube has run advertisements before, during, or after all videos. We will hire a freelance YouTube advertiser<sup>111</sup> to create a 30-second advertisement asking viewers to support Pad the Gap. Specifically, this advertisement will be a TrueView in-stream ad. This means that the ad will play before the chosen video. There will be a link to Pad the Gap's social media in the corner of the screen, and viewers will be allowed to skip the ad after 10 seconds. After the advertisement is created, we will upload it to our YouTube account and create a Google Ads account. From there, we will follow the instructions listed in this section's footnote in Google Ads to create our YouTube video campaign. A TrueView ad will be an effective type of YouTube advertisement to use because it will allow our content views to increase by 500% compared to other types of ads.

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<sup>105</sup> <https://adplanner.effectv.com/>

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/index.php>

<sup>108</sup> <https://today.yougov.com/ratings/media/popularity/tv-networks/women>

<sup>109</sup> <https://vpm.org/watch/tv-schedule>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.oberlo.com/blog/youtube-ads-beginners-launch-first-campaign>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.upwork.com/hire/youtube-marketers/>



### Earned Media Plan

On our Facebook and Instagram pages, we will post a series of advertisement images promoting our policy. An example of one of these advertisements will look like this:



**1 in 5 teenagers in the United States can't afford menstrual products.\* You can help them by supporting Pad the Gap, which will lower menstrual product prices in Virginia by 90%.**

\*Source: Thinx & PERIOD. State of the Period: the widespread impact of period poverty on US students. [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)



## News Release

### Lowering Menstrual Product Prices in Virginia: Why You Should Care

Clara Barnhardt, [cnb395@gmail.com](mailto:cnb395@gmail.com), 804-577-7706

- Period poverty is a major issue in the United States.
- The pandemic has made period poverty even more prevalent.
- Pad the Gap will lower menstrual product prices in Virginia by 90%.

Period poverty is a prevalent problem in the United States. Every day, menstruators just like you have to choose between food and feminine hygiene products.<sup>112</sup> Many of these individuals are low-income or homeless and, in many cases, teenagers.<sup>113</sup> The inability to afford feminine hygiene products can cause severe consequences, including embarrassment, absence from school classes, and infections.<sup>114</sup>

Due to decreases in income caused by the pandemic, period poverty has become even more troublesome.<sup>115</sup> As of 2020, 25% of women in the United States are unable to afford menstrual products.<sup>116</sup> In Virginia, a box of 36 tampons costs \$9.00.<sup>117</sup> By 2021, the state is expected to lower the tax rate on menstrual products to 1.5%.<sup>118</sup> However, this is not enough. Even with that decreased tax rate, that 25% of women would still be unable to afford that \$9.00. The clear solution is to lower the prices of menstrual products overall.

Many who oppose menstrual equity either devalue women or care more about their money than other individuals' lives.<sup>119</sup> That's not what we believe at Pad the Gap. At Pad the Gap, we believe that all menstruators deserve to feel clean and comfortable regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexuality. For this reason, we are working to pass a policy that would decrease the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%.

For more information on Pad the Gap, please contact Clara Barnhardt at [cnb395@gmail.com](mailto:cnb395@gmail.com) or 804-577-7706.

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<sup>112</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study\\_n\\_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study_n_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4)

<sup>113</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>118</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/703687071/tampon-tax-repeal-benefits-women-but-comes-at-a-cost-to-states>





### **Editorial**

\*Note: Since the Senate of Virginia is located in Richmond, it would be preferable for this to appear in the Richmond Times Dispatch.<sup>120</sup>

Period poverty is a prevalent problem in the United States. Every day, menstruators just like you have to choose between food and feminine hygiene products.<sup>121</sup> Many of these individuals are low-income or homeless and, in many cases, teenagers.<sup>122</sup> The inability to afford feminine hygiene products can cause severe consequences, including embarrassment, absence from school classes, and infections.<sup>123</sup>

Due to decreases in income caused by the pandemic, period poverty has become even more troublesome.<sup>124</sup> As of 2020, 25% of women in the United States are unable to afford menstrual products.<sup>125</sup> In Virginia, a box of 36 tampons costs \$9.00.<sup>126</sup> By 2021, the state is expected to lower the tax rate on menstrual products to 1.5%.<sup>127</sup> However, this is not enough. Even with that decreased tax rate, that 25% of women would still be unable to afford that \$9.00. The clear solution is to lower the prices of menstrual products overall.

Many who oppose menstrual equity either devalue women or care more about their money than other individuals' lives.<sup>128</sup> That's not what we believe at Pad the Gap. At Pad the Gap, we believe that all menstruators deserve to feel clean and comfortable regardless of gender, race, religion, or sexuality. For this reason, we are working to pass a policy that would decrease the prices of feminine hygiene products in Virginia by 90%.

If you care about women, you should care about this. We all bleed together. Let's pad the gap.

<sup>120</sup> <https://richmond.com/contact-us/forms/news-opinion-submissions/>

<sup>121</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study\\_n\\_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/period-poverty-tampons-study_n_5c379cbee4b045f6768a2ce4)

<sup>122</sup> [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455788](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-kf3wep2olz67geaaw3d6i6xrm-story.html>

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>

<sup>127</sup> <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?201+sum+SB231S>

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/15/703687071/tampon-tax-repeal-benefits-women-but-comes-at-a-cost-to-states>



### **Hill Blitz Plan**

Considering that we need to speak with members of the Virginia Senate, we will be venturing to district locations of the Virginia Senate.<sup>129</sup> We will meet with members of the Virginia Senate Education and Health Committee. Specifically, we plan on speaking with Ghazala Hashmi<sup>130 131</sup> and Mamie Locke, since they have both proven to value women's healthcare. Additionally, we will also meet with Jennifer Boysko, who is on the Transportation Committee, General Laws and Technology Committee, and Social Services Committee.<sup>132</sup>

The Senate of Virginia's session office address<sup>133</sup> is:

Pocahontas Building

P.O. Box 396

Richmond, VA 23218.

Hashmi's staff members are Jacob Giovia, Kayla Mohammed, and Nicole Jefferson.<sup>134</sup> Her office is located in Room E516.<sup>135</sup> Locke's staff members are Theresa Parker, Chase Putney, and Jessica Cook.<sup>136</sup> Her session office is located in Room E510.<sup>137</sup> Boysko's staff members are Karen Harrison, Kathy Shupe, Lucy Greenman, Alec Fischbein, Matthew Marshall, Alexander Parham, Claire Ross, and Mehrisa Shah.<sup>138</sup> Her session office is located in Room E513.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/districtlist.php>

<sup>130</sup> <https://ghazalahashmi.com/> (\*Note: Source became unavailable after completing research.)

<sup>131</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Ghazala\\_Hashmi](https://ballotpedia.org/Ghazala_Hashmi)

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.jenniferboysko.com/>

<sup>133</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/memberpage.php?id=S108>

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/memberpage.php?id=S67>

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/memberpage.php?id=S106>

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.



Slide 1

# Pad the Gap

Clara Barnhardt  
SCOM 611  
Fall 2020



**PAD THE GAP**

*We bleed **together.***

Slide 2

## The Issue: Period Poverty

- Period poverty: Menstruators are unable to afford the products they need. <sup>1</sup>
- A box of 36 tampons in Virginia costs \$9.00. <sup>2</sup>
- 20% of teenagers cannot afford menstrual products. <sup>3</sup>
- 25% of women in the United States cannot afford menstrual products due to the pandemic. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wtvm.com/2019/11/20/women-forced-choose-between-food-and-menstrual-products/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nbc12.com/2020/02/04/va-senate-unanimously-passes-bill-lift-state-tax-menstrual-products/>  
<sup>3</sup> [https://cdn.shodor.com/files/1.0755/1492/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Think\\_PPERIOD.pdf245478](https://cdn.shodor.com/files/1.0755/1492/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Think_PPERIOD.pdf245478)  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.baltimorean.com/coronavirus/cng-co-to-end-period-poverty-20200727-4f2bweep2olz167geaw3d6j2vrm-4tocy.html>



Slide 3

## Who We Are

Pad the Gap aims to lower the prices of menstrual products in Virginia by 90%.

Slide 4

## Beliefs

- All menstruators deserve equal access to menstrual products.
- All menstruators deserve an effective education.
- Women deserve to be treated as equally as men.



Slide 5

## Goals

- Short-Term:
  - Hold events to raise awareness of the issue and proposed policy
  - Utilize social media to encourage individuals to donate
  - Use paid media on TV and YouTube to promote Pad the Gap's message
- Long-Term
  - End goal: Pass policy that will lower menstrual product prices by 90%

Slide 6

## Partners

- BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters)
- Helping Women Period
- Period Equity
- The Achiever Academy



Slide 7

## Social Media

- Instagram and Facebook
- Fundraising
  - Social media donation links
  - Merchandise
- Earned Media - Advertising

Slide 8



## Fundraising Merchandise



Slide 9

## Events and Gimmicks

- Events:
  - Menstrual Product Drives
  - Menstrual Hygiene Management Day
- Gimmicks:
  - The Tampon Trees

Slide 10

## Paid & Earned Media

- Paid Media:
  - Television advertising
  - YouTube advertising
- Earned Media:
  - Social media advertising



Slide 11

**1 in 5 teenagers in the United States can't afford menstrual products.\* You can help them by supporting Pad the Gap, which will lower menstrual product prices in Virginia by 90%.**



\*Source: Thinx & PERIOD. State of the Period: the widespread impact of period poverty on US students. [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper\\_Thinx\\_PERIOD.pdf?455768](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455768)

*\*Actress Portrayal*

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Virginia is for lovers.  
Let's show some love to our  
menstruators.



**PAD THE GAP**

*We bleed together.*