

2022 Guide to the Issues



Hot Take: The Georgia state sales tax on menstrual products is unconstitutional based on the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

The Facts:

- It is a tax that is borne primarily by women, who are already economically disadvantaged in our state.
- Menstrual products are a medical necessity, not a choice.
- These items should have been included in the exemptions given at the time groceries and prescriptions were exempted.
- Eliminating the tax now would remedy that oversight while removing barriers for those most in need.

INCREASE DOE FUNDING TO INCLUDE 5TH GRADE STUDENTS

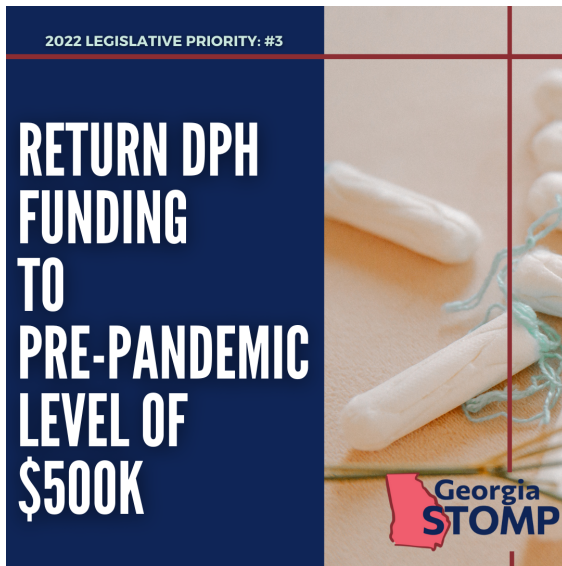


2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY #2

Hot Take: Now, more than ever, it is vital students have what they need to be focused on their education. Providing menstrual products in schools is essential to ensuring a student’s education isn't negatively impacted because of a lack of supplies. Current funding only covers students in grades 6-12, but school nurses and others working in schools often report needing to supply products for younger students. A Georgia STOMP survey of Georgia school nurses documents that when products aren’t supplied by school systems, nurses and other school staff bear these costs personally.

The Facts:

- In 2019 (FY20), the first allocation (\$1M) in the state budget was created for DOE to provide “feminine hygiene products” in schools. Since the initial allotment, these funds have been decreased, due to statewide austerity cuts and COVID budget restrictions, restored, and in FY22, expanded.
- In both fiscal years for which data exists, spending of allocated funds by schools exceeded 95%.
- Products purchased with these funds directly impacted students’ ability to participate fully in their education, especially those most vulnerable students from low-income families.
- The impacts of these products reach far beyond a single classroom or school campus; research shows that a girl’s preparedness for puberty affects her sexual and reproductive outcomes, as well as her sense of self.
- Georgia STOMP conducts a yearly survey of school nurses to understand the impact of the funds.
- Recent, and increasing, feedback from nurses and other school officials, consistently points to needs of menstruators much younger than 6th grade.



Hot Take: Family finances have been devastated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Services and products community health departments provide are lifelines for Georgians in need. Restoration of funding for the Department of Public Health to stock menstrual products on their shelves means menstruators in Georgia are healthy and can focus on getting back to work.

The Facts:

- In 2019 (FY20), \$500,000 was allocated to the DPH to provide “feminine hygiene products” through community health departments (CHDs). These funds were decreased (4% statewide cut) to \$480,000 before the budget was finalized.
- The money provided products to Georgians in need. Critically, local CHDs were able to work alongside folks in the schools system to ensure that students whose family members might have difficulty affording products could access a 3-month’s supply at a time, assuring availability outside of the school walls and over the summer.
- Ultimately, only \$132,446 of the 2019 allocation was spent because of the pandemic and the necessary ‘all hands on deck’ approach taken by DPH to address COVID-19. As a result, this funding was eliminated in the FY21 budget
- In the FY22 budget, the funding was only partially restored (\$200K).