

P.L. 2023, Joint Resolution No. 8, *approved May 25, 2023*
Assembly Joint Resolution No. 113

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the last full week of May of each
2 year as “Period Poverty Awareness Week” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, “Period Poverty” is defined as inadequate access to
5 menstrual hygiene products and education, clean toilets, and
6 handwashing facilities; and
7 **WHEREAS**, The average menstruator spends approximately \$9 per
8 month, or \$1,964 over the course of a lifetime, on menstrual
9 hygiene products; and
10 **WHEREAS**, As of 2021, 30 states impose a “tampon tax,” or a sales tax
11 on menstrual hygiene products, making these essential health
12 products even more difficult for low-income menstruators to afford;
13 and
14 **WHEREAS**, Ten percent of New Jersey women live in poverty,
15 according to data compiled by Spotlight on Poverty and
16 Opportunity; and
17 **WHEREAS**, In 2020, 66 percent of low-income menstruators surveyed
18 in St. Louis, MO reported being unable to afford menstrual hygiene
19 products at some point during the previous year, while 20 percent
20 of these respondents faced this problem on a monthly basis; and
21 **WHEREAS**, One in five low-income menstruators reports missing
22 school, work, or events because they lack access to menstrual
23 hygiene products; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Federal statute and regulations prohibit safety-net
25 programs for low-income individuals, such as Medicaid, the
26 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the
27 Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and
28 Children (WIC), from providing enrollees with free menstrual
29 hygiene products; and
30 **WHEREAS**, Food banks often lack a reliable supply of menstrual
31 hygiene products for clientele because many donors are unaware
32 that federal safety-net programs do not cover these essential health
33 items; and
34 **WHEREAS**, Homeless persons, incarcerated individuals, and
35 transgender individuals are disproportionately impacted by period
36 poverty, since they lack the means or opportunity to access
37 menstrual hygiene products easily, if at all; and
38 **WHEREAS**, A recent study by researchers at George Mason University
39 found that women who experienced period poverty at some point in
40 the past year were more likely to report moderate or severe
41 depression than women who did not experience period poverty; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Lack of access to free or low-cost menstrual hygiene
2 products forces many low-income individuals to choose between
3 purchasing food or these essential health products; and
4 **WHEREAS**, Some menstruators, unable to access menstrual hygiene
5 products, extend the length of time that they use a tampon or a pad,
6 or re-use soiled pads, risking infection or even toxic shock
7 syndrome; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Other menstruators who lack access to menstrual hygiene
9 products are forced to use potentially unhygienic alternatives, such
10 as diapers, rags, newspapers, or socks; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Legislation introduced by United States Representative
12 Gracie Meng (D-NY) that would ensure expanded access to free
13 menstrual hygiene products for certain vulnerable populations
14 failed to advance in the 116th session of the United States Congress;
15 and
16 **WHEREAS**, Period poverty hinders the academic, economic,
17 employment, and social advancement of too many New Jersey
18 residents who menstruate; and
19 **WHEREAS**, Awareness of, and accurate information about, the
20 complex issue of period poverty is a critical tool to ensuring
21 menstrual equity for all of New Jersey’s menstruators; now,
22 therefore,

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24 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
25 *State of New Jersey:*

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27 1. The last full week in May of each year is designated as
28 “Period Poverty Awareness Week” in the State of New Jersey to
29 promote an awareness of, and public actions to address, period
30 poverty.

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32 2. The Governor is requested to annually issue a proclamation
33 calling upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe
34 “Period Poverty Awareness Week” with appropriate activities and
35 programs.

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37 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

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40 **STATEMENT**

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42 This joint resolution designates the last full week of May of each
43 year as “Period Poverty Awareness Week” in order to promote
44 awareness of, and public actions to address, period poverty. Period
45 poverty is defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene
46 products and education, clean toilets, and handwashing facilities.
47 Access to menstrual hygiene products, such as tampons or sanitary
48 pads, is particularly difficult for homeless individuals, incarcerated

1 menstruators, and transgendered persons. Moreover, low-income
 2 menstruators frequently have difficulty affording the cost of
 3 menstrual hygiene products, since federal safety-net programs, such
 4 as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 5 (SNAP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for
 6 Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), do not cover these essential
 7 health products. Too often, menstruators are forced to miss school,
 8 work, or important events because they lack access to, or cannot
 9 afford to buy, the products needed to manage menstrual periods. It
 10 is the intent of the bill’s sponsor to promote public awareness of
 11 period poverty so that New Jersey’s menstruators no longer have to
 12 choose between purchasing food or menstrual hygiene products.

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17 Establishes the last full week of May as “Period Poverty
 18 Awareness Week.”