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Testimony in Support of HB 3294 16 March 2021

Chair Alonso-Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron & Weber, & members of the committee:

I am writing to express **Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's support for HB 3294: The Menstrual Dignity Act.** Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon affirms that access to menstrual products should be universal for students in Oregon and that an individual who menstruates should not have to miss school due to a lack of access to menstrual products.

Working with over 150 congregations, organizations, and interfaith partners, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) strives to envision communities of faith in partnership creating a more peaceful, just, sustainable, and compassionate world. EMO works with and for Oregonians through direct service programming, dialogue, and advocacy.

With 1 in 5 menstruators in the US not being able to afford menstrual products every month, and 1 in 4 students having missed class due to a lack of access to period products¹, we are proud to stand behind this overdue and necessary change. **As leading advocates for Oregon's Unaccompanied Houseless Youth (UHY), we know that for students who experience houselessness, especially those who are separated from their families, acquiring menstrual products is just one of many burdens to have to carry alone.** What may be a nominal expense for some is, for others, a significant purchase every month. HB 3294 takes that unneeded worry off of these young people's plates.

This is equally an issue of equitable access to products as well as one of social stigma. No student should experience shame surrounding menstruation and have to stay at home due to a lack of access to menstrual products. As **people of faith**, we avow the inherent dignity of each individual person. We prioritize protection of safety and dignity for all people, including access to basic human needs, which for every menstruating individual, includes access to menstrual products.

We urge passage of HB 3294, and extend our gratitude to the individuals and organizations who helped craft the legislation. We thank you for your work and for your consideration of this bill.

In partnership,

Olivia Asato
Public Policy Associate
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

¹ <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/16896>