



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams
New York City Council Committee on Women's Issues
Council Chambers, City Hall
Thursday, June 2, 2016**

Good morning Chairperson Laurie Cumbo and members of the New York City Council Committee on Women's Issues. Thank you, as well, to New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, both leaders in this effort, for the opportunity to submit testimony at today's hearing on women's issues as it relates to feminine hygiene products.

Brooklyn is home to approximately 2.6 million people, and roughly half of those residents are women. As we discuss the legislation proposed today that will increase access to feminine hygiene products for girls and women in schools, shelters, and jails, as well as the resolution to call on Governor Andrew Cuomo to sign legislation that eliminates the sales tax on such products, we must remember the breadth of positive physical and mental impacts that these reforms will have on girls and women not only in Brooklyn, but throughout New York City.

I applaud and fully support the three bills before the committee today. Intro 1128 calls to provide free feminine hygiene products to girls and women in public schools. It is my understanding that pilot programs in the Bronx and Queens, in which free dispensers were installed in bathrooms, have aided in addressing the issue of missed class and mitigated the need to visit the nurse's office in order to obtain products. Young women in school should not have to miss school or deal with the anxiety of not having access to feminine hygiene products at their fingertips during school hours.

This conversation applies to girls and women who are also in our shelter system who are already dealing with a number of hardships. Providing these resources to shelters means that it is one less expense for women, and eases the minds of countless women who shouldn't have to worry about basic hygiene conditions while a part of the shelter system. Intro 1123 does just this, and has my full support.

Intro 1122, which will require the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide to feminine hygiene products immediately upon request, will improve access to inmates who may have to deal with a lack of supplies and requests being denied. Just because women are a part of our criminal justice system, does not mean that they should be deprived of basic necessities.

For far too long, the conversations around periods and menstrual cycles have been considered taboo and inappropriate for polite conversation and have subsequently gone undiscussed. That silence has had serious consequences for women and girls. It is time to shatter these taboos and demand that lawmakers on all levels of government recognize the inequity and repercussions that have resulted from unfair taxation and inaccessible resources. I am proud to stand with my colleagues who are like-minded in the notion that it is time to make the changes needed to ensure basic fairness for all.