

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1935

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1935.

As amended, this bill establishes the “Menstrual Hygiene Products Program” (program) in order to promote and facilitate improved access to menstrual hygiene products to low-income residents of the State.

In order to promote and facilitate improved access to menstrual hygiene products to low-income residents of the State, the amended bill requires the Department of Agriculture (department), in consultation with the Departments of Health and Human Services, to develop and implement the program. The department is required to identify, on its Internet website, the food pantries participating in the program, and the times during which each food pantry will be accessible for community residents to obtain menstrual hygiene products. Under the program, the department is required to award annual grants to food pantries for the purchase of menstrual hygiene products. Any costs incurred by a food pantry in providing an adequate supply of menstrual hygiene products will be borne by the State.

Pursuant to the bill, the department is authorized to:

(1) coordinate and encourage partnerships between food pantries, pharmacies, and other retail stores that participate in the program, in order to facilitate the prompt and efficient delivery of menstrual hygiene products;

(2) take appropriate actions to encourage participation in the initiative;

(3) develop educational and informational materials for distribution to low-income individuals, which may incorporate information pertaining to the importance of proper menstrual hygiene products, or any other topic that is relevant to the work of the initiative; and

(4) take such other actions, including but not limited to adopting rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), that the secretary deems necessary or appropriate to implement the provisions of this bill and

any other necessary rules and regulations in consultation with the Departments of Health and Human Services.

This bill appropriates \$200,000 to the Department of Agriculture to support the Menstrual Hygiene Product Program. Under the bill, each food pantry may apply for a grant of up to \$10,000 each year.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments remove a provision that requires an eligible participant in the Menstrual Hygiene Product Program to be a participant in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the New Jersey Supplementary Food Stamp Program, or the Work First New Jersey program. This provision is redundant, since the State's food banks and food pantries do not require clients to demonstrate enrollment in federal or State nutrition assistance programs.

The committee amendments remove definitions regarding the SNAP, WIC, Work First New Jersey, and New Jersey Supplementary Food Stamp programs.

The committee amendments remove a provision that requires the State to bear any costs incurred by a food pantry to provide an adequate supply of menstrual hygiene products.

The committee amendments also make various technical changes, including changes involving usage and punctuation.