

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2082 (Jeff Gonzalez) – As Amended April 6, 2026

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 16 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), upon an appropriation, to establish a program to work with local nonprofit organizations to provide free menstrual products in rural or agricultural communities, with priority given to the communities with the highest poverty rates.

FISCAL EFFECT:

General Fund cost pressures of an unknown amount to CDPH. The author has requested a state budget allocation of \$2 million to CDPH for the purposes of this bill.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by Inland Congregations United For Change. According to the author:

The women who sustain California's agricultural economy too often lack access to basic feminine products due to cost and the isolation of rural worksites. One in four farmworker women reports being unable to afford these essential health items, and many face long workdays in remote areas without reliable access to stores or supplies. This lack of access forces some women to use unsafe alternatives, putting their health, dignity, and well-being at risk. [This bill] addresses this gap by directing [CDPH] to partner with trusted local nonprofits to distribute free feminine hygiene products in rural agricultural communities, prioritizing those with the highest poverty rates. By ensuring reliable, culturally competent distribution of these essential products, this bill will improve health outcomes, protect dignity, and support the women who are vital to California's food system.

- 2) **Background.** Menstrual hygiene products, including tampons, pads, reusable menstrual cups, and other products, are important health tools for managing periods. The average person who menstruates has their period for a cumulative seven years of their life and uses thousands of products over the course of their lifetime. Lifetime costs for menstrual products

in the U.S. can be in the thousands of dollars. Many Americans are unable to afford or otherwise lack access to these basic necessities. Inadequate or improper use of menstrual hygiene products can have serious medical consequences such as urinary tract infections, vulvar contact dermatitis, yeast infections, bacterial vaginosis, and, in rare cases, toxic shock syndrome. The author's budget request letter states more than 100,000 women work in California's agricultural sector, and women working in the fields may not have reliable access to nearby retail locations, on-site distribution, or convenient restocking options during long shifts.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** SB 498 (Becker) would have required indigent wards or detainees be provided basic hygiene products free of charge, but was amended to address a different issue in the Assembly.
- 4) **Prior Legislation.** The Legislature, with the governor, has recently enacted several bills to provide access to menstrual products in the following settings:
 - State prison or a local detention facility (AB 1810 (Bryan), Chapter 939, Statutes of 2024).
 - Public schools maintaining any combination of classes from grades three through 12 (AB 230 (Reyes), Chapter 421, Statutes of 2023).
 - Pilot program using vending machines in five campuses of the California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (AB 2482 (Calderon), Chapter 933, Statutes of 2022).
 - All public schools serving students in grades six through 12, the CSU, each community college district, the University of California, independent institutions of higher education, and private postsecondary educational institutions (AB 367 (C. Garcia), Chapter 667, Statutes of 2021).

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