
A new coalition urges Quebec to take action against period poverty: free menstrual products included in Québec solidaire's official platform

Montreal, August 10, 2026 — Community organizations, healthcare professionals, and independent pharmacies are joining forces to call for free menstrual products in Quebec schools. This initiative is officially supported by the Québec solidaire party, which has included it in its electoral platform.

“One in five Quebec women has already used an alternative menstrual product, such as a tissue or toilet paper, because of the cost of tampons and pads. That's outrageous! Offering free menstrual hygiene products in public places like schools and libraries would have a major impact on gender equality and on the fight against the rising cost of living. A Québec solidaire government will move forward and provide menstrual hygiene products in all public places across Quebec” – **Ruba Ghazal, MNA for Mercier and Québec solidaire co-spokesperson**

70% of people who menstruate in Canada report having missed school or work because of their periods, a direct barrier to academic success that the coalition seeks to eliminate. Seven out of ten Canadian provinces already guarantee free menstrual products in their schools; Quebec is lagging significantly behind.

Without access to menstrual products, many students have no choice but to make do with inadequate solutions. Wearing the same product for too long poses health risks: urinary tract infections, skin irritation, and, in the most severe cases, toxic shock syndrome. Some also turn to makeshift solutions, such as wads of cloth or toilet paper, which further increase these risks. The fear of leaks or odors also leads students to avoid participating in class—a silence that some teachers mistakenly interpret as disengagement—which can lead to absenteeism and limit access to higher education and better long-term career prospects.

“I see students who are afraid of missing school or school activities because they don't have access to menstrual products,” laments Sasha Dyck, a nurse at FACE High School in Montreal. *“It's a barrier to education that can easily be eliminated.”*

“Every week, new requests for menstrual product donations pour in from schools, CEGEPs, and CLSCs across Quebec,” says Aylin Sari, advocacy and partnerships coordinator for Dignité mensuelle. *“The demand far exceeds our capacity: a community organization cannot make up for a lack of public services—it's up to the government to take action.”*

Schools, the first step towards free access for all

The coalition is working toward universal free access to menstrual products in Quebec, following the model of Scotland, where access has been guaranteed since 2020. Since education falls directly under the jurisdiction of the Quebec government, and because this is a pivotal time in the lives of people who menstruate, the coalition has decided to focus first on schools (petition 12149). When it was tabled in the National Assembly, the petition received support from Liberal MNA Jennifer Maccarone—a sign that this issue transcends partisan lines. Other initiatives, such as those outlined in petition 12289, launched by Familiprix pharmacies, are showing the path toward the ultimate goal of free menstrual products for all.

These measures represent significant economic benefits for Quebec. Investing in menstrual equity means investing in the female workers of tomorrow and preserving Quebec's position as a leader in labour market equality.

With the October 2026 general election approaching, the coalition calls on all parties to make this measure a shared campaign pledge. This is an issue that has already brought together elected officials from different parties, and it should not have to wait for a new legislative debate to become a reality.

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About the coalition Led by Monthly Dignity, the coalition brings together Sasha Dyck, nurse at FACE High School and author of petition 12149, Éliane Latreille and Brigitte Labbé of Familiprix Masson and authors of petition 12289, as well as Nisrine Chihani, coordinator of the Bordeaux-Cartierville youth roundtable. Its goal is to advance menstrual equity in Quebec through advocacy, on-the-ground testimonials, and evidence-based data.

About Monthly Dignity A registered charity founded in 2017, Dignité mensuelle is the only organization in Quebec entirely dedicated to combating period poverty. Its team of six coordinates the free distribution of menstrual products, as well as education and advocacy, through a network of more than 75 community partner organizations, serving more than 100,000 people each year. <https://monthlydignity.org/>

Information about the petitions

Petition 12149 — Calls for free menstrual products in all elementary and secondary schools in Quebec, as well as a subsidy for those who buy reusable products. Sponsored by the Liberal MNA Jennifer Maccarone and signed by almost 1000 Quebeckers.

<https://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/exprimez-votre-opinion/petition/Petition-12149/index.html>

Petition 12289 — Calls for financial assistance for menstrual products, the inclusion of reusable products, and a Quebec plan to address period poverty. Sponsored by independent MNA Marwah Rizqy and signed by over 6800 Quebeckers.

<https://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/exprimez-votre-opinion/petition/Petition-12289/index.html>

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