

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2018

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairperson
Committee on House Administration
1316 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis,

As you begin your tenure as the leaders of the Committee on House Administration, we ask that you clarify in your guidance that Members may use their Members' Representational Allowance (MRA) to purchase menstrual products and that you provide these products in the House Office Supply Store.

According to the Members' Congressional Handbook, the MRA must only be used for "ordinary and necessary" expenses in support of the Member's official and representational duties. This has been interpreted to include hygienic products such as lotion, tissues, first aid kits – and even a tissue box engraved with a congressional seal has qualified as an MRA-approved purchase. Just as these items are necessary for employees of the House of Representatives, so too are menstrual products.

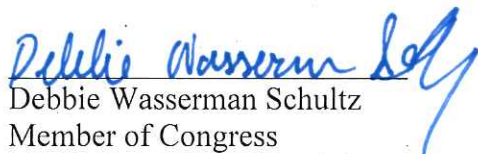
Under current leadership, the Committee initially provided unclear guidance on the purchase of menstrual products leading to confusion over what the MRA covers and what it does not. For thousands of House employees, menstrual products are a necessity, not an optional luxury.


In addition to clarifying your guidance, we ask that you make menstrual products available for purchase in the House Office Supply Store. Currently, Members and staff may purchase MRA-approved products in the store. These include items ranging from a stain removal pen to rubber gloves. Menstrual products, which are only available in limited locations across the Capitol, should be included among this collection of items.

The record number of women who were elected to the 116th Congress have shown us the power, diversity, and representation that women bring to the table. As they joined our ranks – many of them proud champions of gender equity – Congress will need to evolve with the needs of Members and their staff. And this begins with meeting the basic needs of women on Capitol Hill.

These changes are a small, but important step towards greater gender equity in Congress. We thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress


Grace Meng
Member of Congress