



To: Members of the Denver City Council
From: NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado
Gena Ozols, Political Director

Re: Repeal of the “Tampon Tax”

Dear Members of the Denver City Council,

NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado stands in support of the reclassification of feminine hygiene products into necessary items, and the ultimate repeal of taxes on these products. Community leaders and legislators all over the country are pushing for new laws, at all levels of the government, to reduce or eliminate the taxes on tampons. Supporters of the measure say that items related to menstruation are a medical necessity and thus should fall under tax-free medical exemptions and we could not agree more. We hope that you will join us in this position.

Only five states in the country have explicitly outlawed the luxury tax on tampons: Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maryland. In three other states, Alaska, Montana, Delaware, New Hampshire, and Oregon, there is no sales tax. That leaves 40 states and the District of Columbia that tax women for having periods.[1] Even President Obama shared his opinion on this matter during his Presidency: “I have to tell you, I have no idea why states would tax these as luxury items. I suspect it’s because men were making the laws when those taxes were passed.”[2]

According to the City and County of Denver’s 2015 Medical Exemptions Tax Guide, tampons are taxable but other “Blood Supplies” are exempt[3]. In the city of Denver, tampons are subject to a total of 7.65% sales tax (2.9% state, 3.65% city, and 1.1% Special Tax). A \$7 box of tampons would cost \$7.54.

No cities or counties in Colorado currently exempt tax on tampons despite these items being the most commonly used and necessary feminine hygiene products available on the market, and Denver should use its position as the state’s main population center to lead on this groundbreaking policy that will help, even so slightly, to remove financial tax burdens that currently fall only on set of people because of the way their bodies are made.

Colorado should not be in the habit of attempting to fix our budgetary issues by placing unfair burden on specific communities, in this case, women and trans* people who have periods. People all over the world are demanding equal treatment under the law, and being taxed for

necessary items where there is no cis-male equivalent is discriminatory by nature. Even a small burden placed on one group while not being placed on another is discriminatory, and flippant attitudes in regards to undoing the unjust double standard at play here is disrespectful towards women.

We hope that the council will strongly consider this measure and vote to support it. Denver has long been a leader in Colorado, and this move would send a strong message to the rest of the state that the city believes that all people who have regular menstrual cycles, should not face additional mandated costs associated with their healthcare needs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gena Ozols
Political Director
NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado
Resident of Denver, Colorado

[1] <http://fusion.net/story/142965/states-that-tax-tampons-period-tax/>

[2] <http://time.com/4183108/obama-tampon-tax-sanitary/>

[3] https://www.denvergov.org/Portals/571/documents/TaxGuide/Medical_Exemptions.pdf