

HB 920 -- HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS FOR PRISONERS

SPONSOR: Coleman (97)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Special Committee on Criminal Justice by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill specifies that the Director of the Department of Corrections must ensure that tampons and sanitary napkins are available for free to offenders while they are confined in any of the department's correctional centers. The director must ensure that the products conform with applicable industry standards. Additionally, every sheriff and jailer who holds a person in custody pursuant to a writ or process for a criminal offense must ensure that tampons and sanitary napkins are available for free to such person in custody, in a quantity that is appropriate for the health care needs of the person. The sheriff or jailer must ensure that the products conform with applicable industry standards.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this would ensure that women who are incarcerated in Missouri jails or prisons have access to feminine hygiene products. They currently have access to one size of sanitary napkin and they have taken to making their own tampons. They have accidents but can get written up for having accidents. It is a surprising oversight considering it's 2019.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Coleman; Missouri Appleseed; Nicole Lynch, Empower Missouri; and the St Louis Area Diaper Bank.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the departments are available to answer any questions and the Department of Corrections would like to pursue this as long as there is funding.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri Department of Corrections; and the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic And Sexual Violence.