

July 19, 2016

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:


We write to request that feminine hygiene products such as tampons, pads, liners, and similar products be made available to federal female inmates and detainees on demand and at no-cost.

Although there are 13,111 women incarcerated in federal prisons, we are not aware of any uniform standard pertaining to the pricing or distribution of feminine hygiene products, or the quantity of such products that must be made available to each woman. In New York City, these products are made available to prisoners on demand and free of charge. We urge you to establish a similar policy, and make it applicable to all federal female prisoners – including those in state and local prisons awaiting transfer.

According to our research, the Commissary price charged for tampons can fluctuate by more than 100 percent from one federal prison to another. We feel that there is no excuse for such dramatic difference in pricing. If your agency is unable to make feminine hygiene products available on demand and free of charge, we urge it to, at the very least, standardize the price charged for such products – ideally, at a price no higher than the price at which the items were procured. The federal government should not profit from providing basic health necessities to incarcerated women.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and for all that you do. You are an inspiration to women across government, and we look forward to working with you to address this concern.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
New York City Council Member

Cc: The Honorable Thomas R. Kane, Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons