



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ST. LOUIS CITY BOARD OF ALDERMEN VOTE TO  
IMPROVE INCARCERATED WOMEN'S HEALTH**

ST. LOUIS (April 15, 2019) On April 15, 2019, the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen passed Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia's Board Bill 212, which legislates the provision of free tampons and sanitary pads conforming to industry standards to people incarcerated in St. Louis city jails and improved prenatal and postnatal care for pregnant inmates. The legislation passed with 10 sponsors and with the support of the St. Louis City Department of Public Safety including St. Louis Corrections Commissioner Dale Glass.

"This new law affirms our commitment to inmate and infant health by ensuring high quality prenatal and postpartum health care, places restrictions on shackling, and requires city jails to provide free tampons and pads that meet industry standards for menstruating inmates. I commend our Corrections Commissioner, the City Sheriff, and my colleagues on being partners in this important work moving health and dignity forward in the City of St. Louis. Thanks to Missouri Appleseed, whose guidance and expertise were key to ensuring this legislation was the best it could be" said Alderwoman Christine Ingrassia.

As referenced by Alderwoman Ingrassia, Board Bill 212's language on access to menstrual products stemmed from Missouri Appleseed's 2018 research project on incarcerated women's menstrual hygiene practices and needs. Missouri Appleseed's research occurred in Missouri's two state prisons for women, Chillicothe Correctional Center and the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center. The research concluded that the free sanitary pads provided to menstruating inmates were not adequate to manage their menstrual health, and that many inmates could not regularly afford to purchase name-brand tampons or pads from the prison canteen. 80.3% of menstruating inmates reported having used homemade tampons constructed from materials available in the prison. Moreover, 88.7% of menstruating inmates reported having experienced at least one period accident in which they leaked blood onto their clothes, their bedding, or the prison floor, while 50.0% of those who used the free pads reported needing to change them every 30 minutes or more frequently on days of heavy menstrual flow.

Survey responses showed a strong correlation between homemade tampon use and self-reported incidence of vaginal infections. While 22.5% of all menstruating respondents reported having had a vaginal infection over the past six months in prison, that number was 28.1% for those who used homemade tampons.

"Today with passage of Board Bill 212 the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen and Corrections Commissioner Dale Glass recognized the importance of incarcerated women's health and dignity" said Liza Weiss, Missouri Appleseed's Executive Director. St. Louis City joins a growing number of jurisdictions addressing women's health and menstrual hygiene in prisons and jails. These jurisdictions include not only the federal government, but also states such as Maryland and Nebraska. Missouri also has pending legislation on the issue. HB 920, HB 303, and HCB-2 all would improve access to menstrual products for women incarcerated in Missouri.

###

**About Missouri Appleseed**

Founded in 2017, Missouri Appleseed is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public interest law center that works on policy issues at the intersection of criminal justice and public health. Learn more about the organization and current projects at [missouriappleseed.org](http://missouriappleseed.org)

**Media Contact**

Liza Weiss

314-977-4611

[lweiss@appleseednetwork.org](mailto:lweiss@appleseednetwork.org)