

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 133

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Designates May 17 of each year as “Menstrual Empowerment Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/7/2022)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating May 17 of each year as
2 “Menstrual Empowerment Day” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Poor menstrual hygiene caused by deficient education on
5 this issue, persisting social stigma surrounding menstruation,
6 limited access to feminine hygiene products, and poor sanitation
7 infrastructure undermine the opportunities, health, and overall
8 social status of women and girls around the world; and
9 **WHEREAS**, Consequently, millions of women and girls are kept from
10 reaching their full potential; and
11 **WHEREAS**, May 17, 1912 is the birthday of Mary Beatrice Davidson
12 Kenner; and
13 **WHEREAS**, Kenner, an inventor who holds the most patents of any
14 Black woman, was born in Monroe, North Carolina to inventor
15 Sidney Nathaniel Davidson and a mother who is unknown to the
16 public record; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Kenner earned her first patent in 1957 for the sanitary belt,
18 an invention that aimed to prevent menstrual blood from leaking
19 onto clothing, which was a common problem for women at the
20 time; and
21 **WHEREAS**, The Sonn-Nap-Pack Company contacted Kenner intending
22 to market her sanitary belt, but when they learned that she was
23 Black, they declined; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Beltless pads were invented in the 1970s and women
25 stopped using sanitary belts; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Sadly, Kenner has never truly been recognized for her
27 contributions to menstrual empowerment either during her lifetime
28 or even after she passed away; and
29 **WHEREAS**, It is appropriate that New Jersey honor Kenner and her
30 birthday by designating May 17 of each year as “Menstrual
31 Empowerment Day”; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Also celebrated in May of each year, “World Menstrual
33 Hygiene Day” is a global advocacy platform that aims to: promote
34 good menstrual health and hygiene for all women and girls; change
35 negative social stigma around menstrual health and hygiene; and
36 engage decision-makers to increase the political priority and
37 advocate for menstrual health and hygiene at global, national and
38 local levels; and
39 **WHEREAS**, The vision of this platform is to create, by 2030, a world
40 where no woman or girl is held back because she menstruates; and
41 **WHEREAS**, This means a world in which: every woman and girl is
42 empowered to manage her menstruation safely, hygienically, with
43 confidence and without shame; every woman can access and afford
44 the menstrual product of their choice; period stigma is eliminated;
45 every person (including men and boys) has basic information about
46 menstruation; and every person can access period-friendly water,
47 sanitation and hygiene facilities worldwide; and

1 **WHEREAS**, In order to end period poverty and stigma by 2030,
2 significantly more investment in menstrual health and hygiene is
3 necessary, as well as collective action by people and entities at the
4 local, state, and global levels; and

5 **WHEREAS**, It is important that the State of New Jersey join in this
6 collective action by designating a special day to celebrate menstrual
7 empowerment; now, therefore,

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9 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the
10 State of New Jersey:

11
12 1. May 17 of each year is designated as “Menstrual
13 Empowerment Day” in New Jersey.

14
15 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
16 proclamation and call upon public officials, private organizations,
17 and all citizens of this State to observe “Menstrual Empowerment
18 Day” with appropriate awareness activities and programs.

19
20 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

21
22
23 STATEMENT

24
25 This joint resolution designates May 17 of each year as
26 “Menstrual Empowerment Day” in New Jersey.

27 Poor menstrual hygiene undermines the opportunities, health,
28 and overall social status of millions of women and girls around the
29 world, often preventing them from reaching their full potential. It is
30 the sponsor’s intent that designating an annual “Menstrual
31 Empowerment Day” will help recognize and promote efforts taking
32 place at the local, State, and global levels to promote good
33 menstrual hygiene, ensure equitable access to feminine hygiene
34 products, end period poverty, and eliminate stigmas associated with
35 menstruation. Designating May 17 as “Menstrual Empowerment
36 Day” will also help celebrate the achievements of Mary Beatrice
37 Davidson Kenner, an inventor who pioneered a useful menstrual
38 hygiene product that was overlooked solely because Ms. Kenner
39 was Black. Mary Beatrice Davidson Kenner’s birthday was May
40 17, and so designating the day as “Menstrual Empowerment Day”
41 will afford her a measure of long-deferred but richly deserved
42 recognition.

43 This resolution calls on the Governor to annually issue a
44 proclamation and call upon public officials, private organizations,
45 and all citizens of New Jersey to observe “Menstrual Empowerment
46 Day” with appropriate awareness activities and programs.