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# Rep. Larson, Mayor Bronin, Lt. Governor Bysiewicz Spotlight 'Dignity Grows,' a Community Organization Addressing Period Poverty in Greater Hartford

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Hartford, CT - Today, **Congressman John Larson (CT-01)** and **Mayor Luke Bronin** joined **Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz** and community partners to promote 'Dignity Grows', a local non-profit organization combating period poverty. Dignity Grows provides tote bags filled with a full month supply of free comprehensive hygiene essentials paired with period products to help support neighbors in need. Since its founding in 2019, Dignity Grows has distributed more than 15,000 Dignity Grows Totes per year in the Greater Hartford area.

"To know that a quarter of the women in our nation lack access to basic hygiene products is heartbreaking. The community-grown initiative of neighbors coming together to ensure no one lacks access to their basic needs is a model for towns and cities across the nation. I am proud that Dignity Grows' model is expanding beyond Hartford to serve women across the country," **said U.S. Rep. John B. Larson.**

"Period Poverty and hygiene inequity affect over 25% of our neighbors, negatively impacting not only girls and women but their families and community," **said Jessica Zachs, Founder and CEO of Dignity Grows.** "No one should have to choose between feeding oneself and their family or accessing hygiene necessities. Dignity Grows provides a sense of security and comfort along with much-needed hygiene products."

"We are so thankful to the Dignity Grows team, volunteers, donors, and community distribution partners for their dedication in breaking down barriers and making sure that thousands of women and girls in our community have access to much-needed hygiene products," **said Mayor Bronin.** "By partnering with established social service organizations that can distribute these totes directly to underserved populations in a discreet fashion, Dignity Grows is directly addressing period poverty and changing the lives of women and girls who won't have to worry about whether they can afford basic hygiene necessities. We are so proud of this locally-started organization, and we are excited to see it grow both here and nationwide."

Each Dignity Grows Tote contains sanitary pads and pantyliners, toothpaste and a toothbrush, a bar of soap, deodorant, shampoo and hand wipes, all packed in a discreet, reusable bag. Each tote is made possible by a donation of only \$10 and is assembled by local volunteers. These totes enable girls to attend school without interruption and women to not miss work hours, resulting in higher earning potential.

"Access to menstrual products and the ability to feel clean, capable and confident during one's period is crucial for women. Period poverty is often overlooked, but this form of poverty creates incredible barriers to education and employment opportunities for those women who can't afford basic necessities during their cycle," **said Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz.** "The work that Dignity Grows does for our Connecticut community is incredibly impactful, and will allow women experiencing period poverty to have access to the same opportunities as their peers who have access to these products. I want to thank all of the volunteers, donors, community partners and all who continue the important work of combatting this issue right here in Connecticut."

Dignity Grows distributes the hygiene totes in partnership with local direct social service agencies, which include Hartford Public Schools, CT FoodShare, the Boys & Girls Club of Hartford, Interval House, Charter Oak Cultural Center, COMPASS Youth Collaborative, COBA and more. It was founded in 2019 in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford. Dignity Grows, now a national movement, boasts over 40 chapters across the US. More information can be found here: <https://dignitygrows.org/>.

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