

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2900

To provide for research to determine the extent to which the presence of dioxin, synthetic fibers, and other additives in tampons and similar products used by women with respect to menstruation pose any risks to the health of women, including risks relating to cervical cancer, endometriosis, infertility, ovarian cancer, breast cancer, immune system deficiencies, pelvic inflammatory disease, and toxic shock syndrome, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 7, 1997

Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. WALSH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BROWN of California, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. YATES, Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN, Mr. DELLUMS, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, and Mr. ENGEL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce.

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## A BILL

To provide for research to determine the extent to which the presence of dioxin, synthetic fibers, and other additives in tampons and similar products used by women with respect to menstruation pose any risks to the health of women, including risks relating to cervical cancer, endometriosis, infertility, ovarian cancer, breast cancer, immune system deficiencies, pelvic inflammatory disease, and toxic shock syndrome, and for other purposes.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Tampon Safety and  
5 Research Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        The Congress finds as follows:

8            (1) Tampons are used by up to 70 percent of  
9        menstruating women in the United States today,  
10        and the average woman may use as many as 11,400  
11        tampons in her lifetime.

12           (2) Most menstruation products, such as tam-  
13        pons, sanitary pads, and panty liners, contain  
14        dioxins to varying degrees, a by-product of a chlo-  
15        rine-bleaching process used in the manufacture of  
16        paper products.

17           (3) The effects of dioxin from various sources  
18        are cumulative and can be measured 20 to 30 years  
19        after exposure. Women may be exposed to dioxin in  
20        tampons and other menstrual products for approxi-  
21        mately 40 years over the course of their reproductive  
22        lives.

23           (4) Internal documents of the Food and Drug  
24        Administration suggest the agency has not ade-  
25        quately investigated the danger of dioxin in tam-

1        pons, according to a 1992 staff report of a sub-  
2        committee of the Committee on Government Oper-  
3        ations, House of Representatives.

4                (5) The Food and Drug Administration has re-  
5        lied on data provided by feminine hygiene manufac-  
6        turers in determining product safety.

7                (6) Although the Food and Drug Administra-  
8        tion currently requires tampon manufacturers to  
9        monitor dioxin levels in their finished products, the  
10       information is not readily available to the public.

11               (7) The Environmental Protection Agency has  
12       concluded that dioxins are a probable human car-  
13       cinogen (cancer-causing agent).

14               (8) Recent studies have produced conflicting in-  
15       formation about the link between dioxin exposure  
16       and increased risks for endometriosis.

17               (9) The Environmental Protection Agency has  
18       concluded that people with high exposure to dioxins  
19       may be at risk for other noncancer effects that could  
20       suppress the immune system, increase the risk of  
21       pelvic inflammatory disease, reduce fertility, and  
22       interfere with fetal and childhood development.

23               (10) An independent study in 1991 found that  
24       tampons commonly included any of the following ad-  
25       ditives: Chlorine compounds; absorbency enhancers

1 (such as surfactants like polysorbate-20); natural  
2 and synthetic fibers (such as cotton, rayon, poly-  
3 ester, and polyacrylate); deodorant; and fragrance.

4 (11) Toxic shock syndrome has been linked to  
5 tampon use. Such syndrome is a rare bacterial-  
6 caused illness that occurs mostly in menstruating  
7 women. During 1979 and 1980, the syndrome was  
8 responsible for at least 55 deaths and 1,066 nonfatal  
9 cases.

10 (12) Independent research has shown that syn-  
11 thetic fiber additives in tampons amplify toxin pro-  
12 duction, which is associated with toxic shock syn-  
13 drome.

14 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH; RESEARCH ON**  
15 **DIOXIN PURSUANT TO OFFICE OF RESEARCH**  
16 **ON WOMEN'S HEALTH.**

17 Part F of title IV of the Public Health Service Act  
18 (42 U.S.C. 287d et seq.) is amended by adding at the end  
19 the following section:

20 **“SEC. 486C. CERTAIN PROJECTS REGARDING WOMEN'S**  
21 **HEALTH.**

22 **“(a) DIOXIN IN FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS.—**  
23 **“(1) IN GENERAL.—**The Director of NIH, in  
24 collaboration with the Director of the Office, shall  
25 provide for the conduct or support of research to de-

1        terminate the extent to which the presence of dioxin,  
2        synthetic fibers, and other additives in tampons and  
3        other feminine hygiene products—

4                “(A) pose any risks to the health of women  
5                who use the products, including risks relating  
6                to cervical cancer, endometriosis, infertility,  
7                ovarian cancer, breast cancer, immune system  
8                deficiencies, pelvic inflammatory disease, and  
9                toxic shock syndrome; and

10               “(B) pose any risks to the health of chil-  
11               dren of women who used such products during  
12               or before the pregnancies involved, including  
13               risks relating to fetal and childhood develop-  
14               ment.

15               “(2) REQUIREMENT REGARDING DATA FROM  
16               MANUFACTURERS.—Research under paragraph (1)  
17               shall include research to confirm the data on tam-  
18               pons and other feminine hygiene products submitted  
19               to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs by manu-  
20               facturers of such products.

21               “(3) DEFINITION.—For purposes of paragraph  
22               (1), the term ‘feminine hygiene products’ means  
23               tampons, pads, liners, and similar products used by  
24               women with respect to menstruation or other geni-  
25               tal-tract secretions.

1       “(b) REPORTS.—Reports on the results of research  
2 under subsection (a) shall be periodically submitted to the  
3 Congress, the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, the Ad-  
4 ministrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and  
5 the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Such reports  
6 shall be made available to the public through the data sys-  
7 tem and clearinghouse program established under section  
8 486A, or through other appropriate means.”.

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