

Erica Kugler

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Speaking On Ideas That Matter

Final Write Up: The Tampon Tax

The “Tampon Tax” or “Pink Tax” is a topic that I did not know much information on until I started this class. As my peers talked about it, I decided to do some digging and further understand why these feminine “luxury products” are being taxed, when these products are a necessity in a woman's life. In the past, many products that are considered to be “feminine” are more expensive when compared to “masculine” products. Razors and body wash are two examples of products that are cheaper to buy for men when compared to women’s products. Tampon Tax is an alliteration, which helps achieve style through language and makes it memorable.

When looking at the history of the Tampon Tax, the first place to abolish this tax was Kenya in 2004. Later Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, and Slovakia all followed and abolished the tax law by jurisdiction. As of November 2018, the majority of the country has tampons being taxed, where there are now only 10 states that have gotten rid of the Tampon Tax in the United States. To this day, the Tampon Tax is constantly being debated, and in recent years more and more countries and states all over the world have been getting rid of this tax. Something that I found interesting was that Viagra, a medication that helps men perform in sexual intercourse, is not taxed, but something as necessary as tampons is. Also, historically, tampons have caused different types of health problems such as toxic shock syndrome.

Aristotle, the father of rhetoric, developed the ideas of ethos, pathos, and logos. Within these ideas, people can be persuaded due to ethical, emotional, and factual reasonings. This can help change their minds. When people see misinformation on the internet (such as that tampons should be taxed because “women can’t hold their bladders”), they do not have the proper information. If more information about women getting sick because they cannot afford tampons/sanitary napkins was out in the world, people’s mindsets may change. An ethical argument to get rid of the Tampon Tax is because women are getting sick and cannot help their menstrual cycle. They should have access to things that can keep them healthy. An emotional argument to get rid of the Tampon Tax is that some people literally cannot afford tampons with the Tampon Tax. It is literally making or breaking people, and some women are having to make their own tampons out of whatever they can find to protect their clothes. A logical argument against the Tampon Tax is that people die if they do not have access to tampons. People who are having to reuse cloth or use stuffing from furniture for tampons get infections and literally die. If these sanitary napkins and tampons are not made available, lives are literally at stake.

Arguments surrounding the idea that they should stay taxed within our society include the reasoning that they are not necessary. People explain that no one is forcing women to use tampons or pads, but at the end of the day, it's the most hygienic way to deal with the menstrual cycle. Another argument for why tampons should continue to be taxed is that adult diapers and baby diapers are taxed, and at the end of the day, they are doing the same type of thing and have the same functions. Some people, particularly men, tend to think of menstruation as something women can control. They also include sexism in their daily life, as a “habitude” that affects how they think about the Tampon Tax. Their attitudes and beliefs affect how they view the Tampon

Tax. While most women want to remove the Tampon Tax, many men are against it and will fight politically against it because of their beliefs about menstruation and women. Because it does not directly affect them, they do not know anything about the topic, and believe what they want to believe/what they have heard, often from not credible sources. They have many fallacies in their thinking, which affects their arguments and ultimately the policy. Because of their thinking about women, they are privilege pathos (emotion) over logos (logic), and they are refusing to do the research necessary to show them how their beliefs are wrong.

Lastly, states within the United States do not want to take the tax off these items because selfishly, they want the money. Anne Butcher states that, “*New York* brings in \$14 million annually from the tax on tampon and sanitary napkin sales” (8). Having our society in such a mindset on the importance of money takes away from the ethics and logical reasoning of whether or not necessities should have a tax.

The Tampon Tax is a problem-solution situation. There is a tax that many people and countries have deemed unreasonable. Many places feel that this is such an important issue, and they have stopped taxing it because of it. Many people also think about the Tampon Tax as ridiculous because women have to pay for something that they cannot help. Many women see tampons and pads as a necessity in life and important especially when they are on their menstrual cycle. Some think that this improvisation of tampons can be seen as unsanity or a major health concern. Many women think of this controversial task as not only about the money but, “it’s also about women seeking and gaining their voice” (Linda Rosenthal).

In conclusion, the Tampon Tax is a vital issue that many countries have already taken a stance on. There are many reasons in all aspects of reasoning (ethos, logos, and pathos) that

show why the Tampon Tax should be repealed. It is only a matter of getting this information out to all parties, public and political, in order for the laws to be changed.

Bibliography

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Rhodan, Maya. "States End the Tampon Tax after the 'Year of the Period'." *Time*, vol. 187, no. 22, 2016, p. 14.