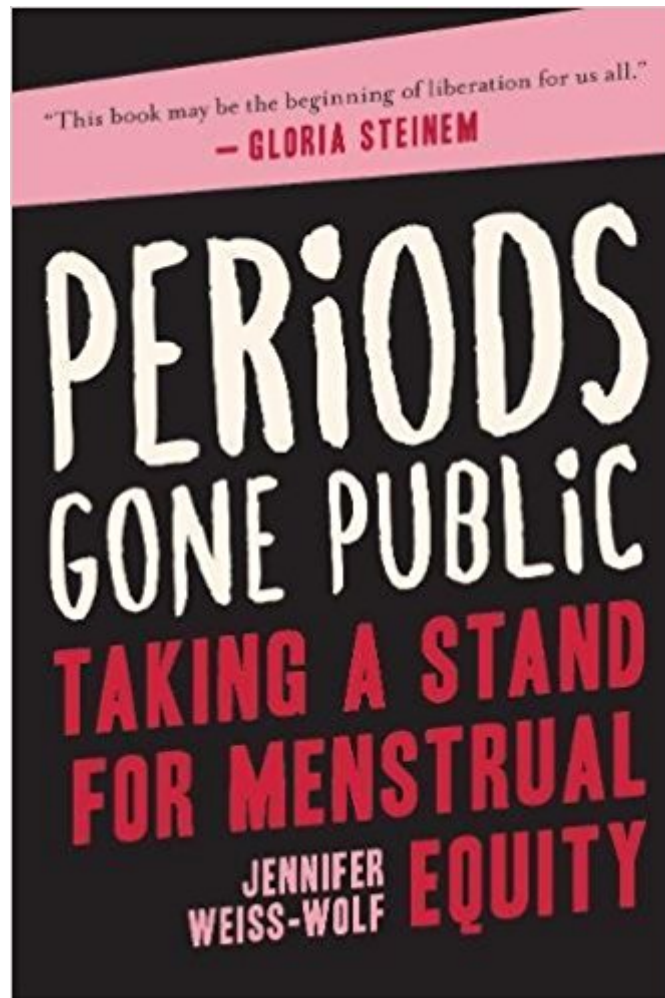




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# Periods Gone Public: Taking A Stand For Menstrual Equity



## Synopsis

The first book to explore menstruation in the current cultural and political landscape and to investigate the new wave of period activism taking the world by storm. After centuries of being shrouded in taboo and superstition, periods have gone mainstream. Seemingly overnight, a new, high-profile movement has emerged—one dedicated to bold activism, creative product innovation, and smart policy advocacy—to address the centrality of menstruation in relation to core issues of gender equality and equity. In *Periods Gone Public*, Jennifer Weiss-Wolf—the woman *Bustle* dubbed one of the nation's "badass menstrual activists"—explores why periods have become a prominent political cause. From eliminating the tampon tax, to enacting new laws ensuring access to affordable, safe products, menstruation is no longer something to whisper about. Weiss-Wolf shares her firsthand account in the fight for "period equity" and introduces readers to the leaders, pioneers, and everyday people who are making change happen. From societal attitudes of periods throughout history—in the United States and around the world—to grassroots activism and product innovation, Weiss-Wolf challenges readers to face stigma head-on and elevate an agenda that recognizes both the power—and the absolute normalcy—of menstruation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Jennifer Weiss-Wolf's *Periods Gone Public*: "Periods Gone Public by Jennifer Weiss-Wolf may be the beginning of liberation for us all." —Gloria Steinem "Jennifer Weiss-Wolf's *Periods Gone Public* gives powerful voice to one of the most ignored human rights issues around the globe. It's required reading for every one of us." —Abigail Jones, *Newsweek* "Jennifer Weiss-Wolf's

passion and vision for menstrual equity continues in *Periods Gone Public*. While both inspiring and educating, she continues to keep menstruation on front pages and at the forefront of conversations across the globe." #151; Elissa Stein, author of *Flow: The Cultural Story of Menstruation* "One of the most important pieces of literature on women's rights and health policy in decades. A game changing blueprint for action." #151; NYC Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland

Jennifer Weiss-Wolf is a leading advocate and voice for equitable menstrual policy in America. Her petition to end the tampon tax, launched in partnership with *Cosmopolitan*, catalyzed a national movement. *Newsweek* deemed her the "architect of the U.S. policy campaign to squash the tampon tax." • Weiss-Wolf's writing and work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *The Nation*, *Bloomberg*, and *Ms. Magazine*, among others. She is on the advisory board of ZanaAfrica Foundation, which provides essential menstrual health education and products to girls in Kenya. She lives in Maplewood, New Jersey.

I was really looking forward to this book but it turned out to be just ok. It starts out strong but goes in circles and becomes less and less interesting as the pages turn. Much of the writing is in the moment and will be dated and irrelevant in just a few years. If you're looking for an approachable yet academic work on issues surrounding menstruation this is not it. This book is much more focused on social media and celebrities with a nod to grassroots level activism and the worldwide impact of the subject. I enjoyed the history lessons that are worked into the book immensely. The history of tampons is more interesting than I expected and those sections became nice breaks from the more politically charged chapters. The book is vaguely about 2015: the year of the period. This doesn't really come across as a cohesive theme though, it's more like a topic that could be a single chapter but instead was sprinkled throughout the book. If you're looking for a book that really dissects current menstrual related issues and you're ok with it being written from an unapologetically feminist perspective this is a good read. For example, there are 34 pages dedicated to the discussion of taxes on feminine hygiene products. I find this topic interesting but when the author gets into how chainsaws are not taxed in Idaho but tampons are my eyes glazed over and I felt like I was reading some rant on a blog. One of the reasons I'm lowering my rating is the way right leaning women are written about. I'm not particularly political myself but I noticed that left leaning writers, publications, and other media were written about in an unfailingly positive way while right leaning media was portrayed in a decidedly negative light. Phrases such as 'huffed the writers from....a

conservative blog' typifies this. We're all women, a simple 'she said' will suffice and allow the reader to draw their own conclusions. The other reason is the self congratulatory writing style. Lots of name dropping and discussion of the things the author did. It's relevant but written in a way that comes off as boastful.

This book is too focused on modern day activists and emphasize the menstrual needs of a woman such as tampon tax repeal, enacting new laws for affordable and safe products for women going through menstrual cycle. Popular figures, actors, singers, and athletes have spoken openly about menstruation that helped to bring the attention of women and the media. Social media trending and activism was evident when comedienne Sarah Silverman tweeted, crime scene in your pants, can a man handle that? The author says that the menstrual movement is a collective accomplishment. They have seen a support for menstruation through a colorful array of music, poetry, visual art, recreation, athletic displays, media trends and pop culture moments. Menstrual activist Kiran Gandhi ran London Marathon while "free bleeding" with blood stained tights. The photo went viral with the title "Going with the flow: blood and sisterhood at the London Marathon." 'Happy to Bleed' is another counter-campaign launched against menstrual taboos in Facebook page of #HappyToBleed. Chandra Bozelko, a former inmate of Connecticut women's correctional facilities and later became an activist for women in prisons has worked with law-makers to enact laws to better the lives of less fortunate women in a prison systems. Bozelko observes that prisons are called the new asylums and house more mentally ill people than hospitals do. But this is not the first time we have heard about such cruelty. The life of Hollywood actress Frances Farmer (1913-1970) serves as glowing example for the abuse of women's rights in state-run facilities for mentally challenged. Farmer's posthumously published autobiography "Will There Really Be a Morning? Described brutal incarceration and denied women's products to maintain proper hygiene. She claimed to have been abused, traumatized and mistreated. This part of the story is clearly shown in the 1982 film "Frances" starring Jessica Lange. Lange later received a nomination in the best actress category in the Academy Awards. In early 1980s, women's activists complained that inmates of correctional facilities do not provide enough hair products. Because prison officials do not understand the needs of such women's products. The demands for fair treatment of women included menstrual equity since the days of suffragists' movement. In 1912, the New York Times reported on the purported "militant hysteria" of suffragettes

that highlighted women's physiological emergencies. The year 1920 reached a point in the history when the 19th amendment was ratified, this granted American women the right to vote—a right known as woman suffrage. Menstrual cycle has been widely discussed the holy scriptures of Tanakh, the Torah and the Old Testament. This is an old Hebrew tradition practiced in ancient Israel according to Leviticus 15:19-33, Genesis 31:35, Isaiah 64:6 and Ezekiel 18:5-6. They explicitly state that women are "unclean" and "impure." The ancient Hindu scriptures such as Rig-Veda or Bhagavadgita does not mention menstruation and in fact none of the four Vedas ever state that a menstruating woman's body is impure or that she cannot perform prayers. Many Vedic gods are female and they are spoken with veneration. The "impurity" of a women during menstrual period may have evolved in middle of medieval period. Perhaps during the post-Vedic time when Puranas were written to describe the Hindu cultural practices. A mention of menstruation may be found in Garuda Purana 15:7-10. The author, Jennifer Weiss-Wolf works for New York's Brennan Center for Justice that is affiliated to NYU School of Law. She could have done more research and provided the reader a historical account of activism since suffrage movement in early 1900s. But this book is largely focused on modern day activists. Tights/pants soaked in blood is not a pretty sight for a man or a woman. Such displays as a part of feminist activism could backfire since many supporters of women's rights may be repulsed or offended by that. Activists have lot to learn from the Hillary Clinton's loss in 2016 Presidential run. Pulling away from mainstream into extremism may do more harm than help women's movements. Blood-soaked pants look more like crime scene photos. It could be considered vulgar. Does anyone display urine soaked panties to make a point? Women also have the right to pass urine but they don't make a public display of it to cause awareness. Let us save that for the adult entertainment!

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