

Bree Candland
Dresden
LD 1234

I'm writing to support LD 1234—"An Act to Ban Cellular Telephones from Public School Classrooms." I teach at Morse High School in Bath, where student cell phones are banned and placed in Yondr pouches at the start of the school day. I have been a public school teacher in Maine for 24 years and this has been the single most important policy change I've witnessed in my time as a teacher. It has been a game changer and has drastically improved school and classroom culture.

Phones are definitely an addiction for many students at this point and human connection is far less a thing than it was 10 years ago. Not having cell phones in the classroom and not having to fight with students at the classroom door when I asked them to put their phones in a box has been a game changer. At the end of class, instead of kids staring at their phones, they talk to other kids. Same thing at lunch. It's a delight to walk through the cafeteria and see kids with their heads up talking to other people at their table instead of all staring down at their phones. And parents can still easily reach their students by sending them an email or calling the main office. I've found a lot of kids are grateful for the intervention to help them reduce their screen time, too. I was recently quoted in a Harpswell Anchor article saying "I don't have to think about cell phones at all," which has been an incredible change and has given me back so much of my mental capacity to focus on teaching and connecting with students.

I wholeheartedly support this legislation.

Best,
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