

April 15, 2024

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Act, LD 1234, to remove mobile phones from Maine public school classrooms. Removing phones from classrooms is a necessary step to refocus our educational environments and prioritize meaningful, distraction-free learning.

First-hand accounts from educators across the country have highlighted the negative impact of smartphones on student attention, academic performance, and mental well-being. Currently, students in Yarmouth schools have access to a school iPad during the day, where they use educational programs for certain subjects, at certain intervals. While I know iPads are a separate discussion, I can tell you from substituting within the Elementary and Middle schools that these screens are absolutely addictive, that children get a thrill from just picking them up, that they are easily distracted by other apps, that academic discussions are not being had (instead, students sit at desks with headphones on, engaging only with a screen). I have also seen students veer off the required work and end up on YouTube — it's just too tempting. The same goes for phones — but the problem is tenfold when it's a pocket-sized device, laden with social media apps, that can be kept at one's desk.

The classroom should be a space for collaboration, critical thinking, engagement with peers and teachers, and personal growth. By removing phones, we create a setting that encourages face-to-face communication, active participation, and deeper focus—skills that are vital for both academic success and real-world preparedness. Morse High School has already taken the step to remove phones from classrooms and seen positive, reaffirming change. Why wouldn't all schools follow suit? NOW is the time.

LD 1234 is about setting appropriate boundaries to foster better habits and healthier learning environments. I urge lawmakers to pass this legislation and take a decisive step toward improving the quality of education for all students.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing policies that support our schools and future generations.

Sincerely,

Alison Saccani

Substitute Teacher, 2nd-8th grade, Yarmouth School District