

Dear Members of the Legislature,

My name is Brooke Brewer and I am writing in support of the proposed legislation to regulate smartphone use in our state's schools. As a mother of children in 1st and 4th grade and as a substitute teacher in our local middle school, I have a unique perspective on this issue from both sides of the classroom door.

In my role as a substitute teacher, I witness firsthand our students' inability to focus, and to engage with learning materials. We are in a school district that already bans cell phones during class, but the pull of the phones in their pockets or the pockets of their bags are simply too powerful for developing brains to resist. I have observed students who appear physically present but are mentally elsewhere, and I find myself having to police the devices in their pocket or bag instead of teaching them. I know this even from myself...even when phones are supposedly put away, the anticipation of checking them creates a continuous cognitive drain.

What troubles me most is how dramatically different today's classroom environment is from when many of us attended school. Students struggle to maintain attention for even short periods, and meaningful face-to-face interactions have been replaced by digital communication even when sitting next to each other. The research cited in this legislation confirms what I see every day: declining mental health and compromised academic performance.

As a parent, I feel overwhelmed by the pressure to regulate technology use when so many other families have different rules. When my children eventually reach middle school, I don't want them to feel excluded or different because we have stricter boundaries around smartphone use than their peers. Individual parents cannot solve this societal problem alone—we need structural support through legislation like this.

While smartphones may not be the only factor affecting our children's mental health and academic performance, they are a significant one that we can address immediately through policy. This is not about denying technology's benefits but about creating appropriate boundaries that allow our schools to fulfill their educational mission.

I urge you to pass this legislation and give our educators the backing they need to create phone-free learning environments. Our children deserve schools where they can develop the focus, social skills, and resilience they need to thrive—without the constant distraction and pressure of smartphones.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brooke Brewer
Parent and Substitute Teacher
Rockland, ME