



**Maine Education Association**  
Jesse Hargrove **President** | Beth French **Vice President** | Jaye Rich **Treasurer**  
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## **Testimony**

### **In Support**

#### **LD 170: Resolve, Establishing a Pilot Program to Reduce Personal Electronic Device Distractions During the School Day.**

**Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association**

**Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee**

**April 16, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other esteemed members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Jesse Hargrove, I am a high school social studies teacher on leave serving as President of the Maine Education Association representing 24,000 members ranging from pre-k through higher education and retired educators. I write in support of *LD 170 Resolve, Establishing a Pilot Program to Reduce Personal Electronic Device Distractions During the School Day*.

Personal digital devices, including cell phones, have become a mainstay in American society. We recognize the incredible capabilities enabling enhanced communication and productivity. My students used the Stock Market Game and Interactive Constitution apps to support classroom activities. Students were also able to monitor assignments and progress information using Student Information System apps. However, we also share in the growing concern of the impact on youth. There have been too many mornings during which I've seen teenagers, sitting in a group, connected to their device rather than playing games with each other or talking. We strive for a society in which humans have better relationships with each other, than with devices.

Furthermore, the Maine Education Association Board of Directors believes student use of personal digital devices, such as cell phones, should be limited during the school day, so that children can fully experience and engage in the rich learning activities developed by highly qualified educators. Restrictions on student cell phone use should be accompanied by initiatives to educate students and the community about responsible cell phone use.

We also believe that educators should maintain professional autonomy to integrate technologies into their practice, modeling how these devices can be used productively and for educational purposes. We understand the unique needs of all students and support the use of personal technologies for medical and/or accessibility needs.

We support a pilot program that may help provide best practice solutions towards these values in support of students, parents, educators, and communities. We urge policymakers to fully understand the impact and the efficacy of the change, rather than jumping to solutions. While there is a growing trend of individuals and parents pushing to ban cell phones in our schools, LD 170 takes the right approach. The proposal will help incentivize districts to experiment with their cell phone policies and allow MEPRI an opportunity for pre and post analysis. This will in turn help this Committee to better understand the impact and inform future discussions about whether a specific policy should be considered for all schools, or whether there may be a menu of good options for schools to consider.

I'm happy to address any questions.

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