

Whitney Bruce
Falmouth
LD 1234

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for LD1234, "An Act to Ban Cellular Telephones from Public School Classrooms." I offer my testimony today from multiple perspectives: as a former school board member, as a parent of two children who graduated from Maine public schools during the cell phone era, and as an educator currently working with high school students.

My experiences in all three roles convince me that this legislation is both necessary and timely. In my work with high school students, we discuss the impacts of technology on learning and focus. As a former school board member, I heard our community's growing concerns about maintaining rigorous, focused education. And as a parent, I have watched how excessive cell phone use impacts students' social development, making them increasingly hesitant to engage in meaningful face-to-face interactions.

For more than a decade, research studies have demonstrated that distractions and multitasking significantly reduce cognitive memory creation and academic performance. The addictive properties of social media and cell phone based communication lead to increased classroom distractions, and greater demands on teachers to moderate technology use. These distractions diminish students' ability to fully engage with complex ideas and develop critical thinking skills.

During my time on the Falmouth school board, community members consistently expressed their desire for rigorous education that prepares students for future success. This legislation would provide school administrators with clear authority to create distraction-free learning environments, allowing students to maximize their learning potential.

During the past 5 years, I've witnessed my students increasingly choose electronic interaction over in-person connections, which long term makes them hesitant to take social risks or engage in meaningful face-to-face conversations. This pattern becomes particularly problematic when these students transition to college, where many struggle to adapt to new social situations and take advantage of opportunities for personal growth.

While some may argue that cell phones can serve educational purposes, the reality is that their presence in classrooms creates far more problems than benefits. Modern schools are well-equipped with appropriate technology for educational purposes and student safety, making personal cell phones unnecessary for academic work.

I strongly urge this committee to support LD1234. This legislation represents a crucial step toward creating the focused, engaging learning environments our students need to develop both academically and socially. By removing this significant source of distraction, we can help ensure Maine's students receive the full benefits of their education and develop the interpersonal skills they need for future success.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Whitney Bruce
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