

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 170

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Faye Anderson
RSU 22

PRESIDENT-ELECT
Joseph Long
MSAD 35/RSU 35

VICE PRESIDENT
Roy Gott
RSU 24

IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT
Jane Osborne
Deer Isle-Stonington CSD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Steven W. Bailey

**MAINE COUNCIL OF
SCHOOL BOARD
ATTORNEYS**

Isabel Ekman, Esq., Chair

**RESOLVE, ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO REDUCE PERSONAL
ELECTRONIC DEVICE DISTRACTIONS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

April 16, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Steven Bailey, the Executive Director of the Maine School Boards Association, here to testify on behalf of the legislative committee of MSBA in opposition to L.D. 170, Resolve, Establishing a Pilot Program to Reduce Personal Electronic Device Distractions During the School Day.

Across Maine, student mental health is one of the largest issues affecting our schools, teachers and classrooms. More students are dealing with depression and anxiety, and educators are dealing with more troubling behaviors every day. Recent research suggests social media is exacerbating these issues, causing lack of sleep, distraction, lack of engagement, and more social isolation. This is an urgent issue that requires attention and response.

While we appreciate this bill's effort to assist our school with this challenge, we do not feel this legislation is the best approach. Our local communities are already implementing policies limiting student device use. Some have purchased individual, locked pouches for every student, or require them to put their phones into a pouch at the beginning of every class.

Our schools are already finding solutions that work the best for their local students, families, and educators. And we feel strongly that they do not need a pilot program – especially one that would not be funded until the 2026-27 school year – to study the effects of those policies on student learning and behavior. We also feel strongly that the adoption of any policy should remain a local decision and should not be mandated by state legislation.

Our school boards would be interested in receiving potential grant funding from the state to help them adopt student device practices. But that funding should not come at the expense of any other state education obligations.