

Whitney Bruce
Falmouth
LD 1234

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Dear Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing following Wednesday's hearing to express my continued strong support for LD1234, "An Act to Ban Cellular Telephones from Public School Classrooms." I offer my comments based upon my six year service on the Falmouth School Board, from 2018-2024.

In all organizations, there's value in considering which parties serve as the ultimate decision makers. In public schools, that's frequently a debate between state control and local control. In a school district, it's a balance of school board and administration. While some decision-making buckets are clearly defined, others are not, and consideration of the most effective path forward is critical.

In many ways, this public health crisis, brought about by the addictive properties of cell phones and the apps connected to them, reminds me of the discussions we had during the pandemic. This crisis is far-reaching and therefore the broader support of state law will serve the greater good of all Maine students.

When a classroom goes "phone free," the responsibility for enforcement lies with the teacher. When a building goes "phone free," it moves to the building principal; the superintendent and/or school board will bear the burden of explanation or enforcement of a district-wide policy. For any group, explaining and supporting the action takes time and energy.

The cover that LD 1234 will provide to districts, boards, superintendents, building administrators, and teachers will ultimately make the transition to bell-to-bell phone-free schools a smoother, more effective and less controversial action. It remains a crucial step towards supporting the equal access to quality education and mental health support that Maine children deserve.

I strongly urge this committee to support LD1234.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Whitney Bruce
Falmouth, Maine