

Stacy Taylor  
Yarmouth  
LD 2212

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A testimony in support of the Phone Free Schools Initiative (section GG) in the Supplemental Budget

Hearing date Friday, February 20th, 10am, State House Room 228

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Dear Sen. Rotundo and Rep. Gattine and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

As a co-founder of the Turn the Tide Coalition, a statewide network of more than 1,000 Maine parents, educators, experts, and healthcare professionals who for the past two years have called for phone-free schools, I can sum up my support for LD 2212, the Phone-Free Schools Initiative, in two words: it's time.

By passing and funding this policy today, Maine will join more than 25 other states that have already implemented bell-to-bell restrictions on student cell phone use during the school day.

The reasons for laws like this are straightforward. Maine teens, like their peers across the country, spend an estimated 1.5 hours of each school day on their phones. Without clear, meaningful guidelines, students are spending roughly a quarter of their time in school texting, scrolling social media, and watching videos, tuned out from their teachers and classmates.

The effective cost of this budget line—about \$4 per Maine public school student (\$700,000 total)—is an incredible investment for Maine taxpayers. The return effectively means an additional 1.5 hours of learning per student, per day.

Bangor English teacher Emilie Throckmorton captured what we risk if we fail to act:

“If you walk past the lunchroom, you’ll see a group of students, and most of them are looking at their phones. I can’t help but feel that we are robbing them of the opportunity to be fully present and engage with one another socially—because they default to their phones, and that’s what phones are designed to make us do.”

For the future of a generation of Maine students, I encourage you to fund LD 2212, Part GG, prohibiting the use of phones during the school day in Maine schools. The future of a generation of Maine students depends on it.

Stacy Taylor  
Yarmouth, parent of a 10 year old  
Turn the Tide Coalition