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Re: Strong support for bell to bell bans in Maine Schools

My name is Alice Kuether, and I am a mom of three living in Falmouth. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of bell to bell cell phone bans.

I want to challenge a common assumption—that high schoolers should have more access to phones during the school day because they're older and should be more responsible.

Brain science research and expert psychiatrists agree: adolescents are still developing the skills needed to manage the powerful pull of cell phones and social media. High school students are especially vulnerable to the distractions of phones and apps. They face intense academic and social pressures and are often deeply entrenched in digital habits that are hard to break. Without clear limits, phones' constant notifications, social media pressures, and addictive apps chip away at their ability to stay present, engaged, and mentally well.

I believe our responsibility as parents is about setting appropriate boundaries that support growth. A device-free school day is one of those boundaries. It creates the conditions high schoolers need to truly focus on their learning and engage in meaningful face-to-face interactions.

By removing phones during the school day, we help them:

Improve attention and focus, leading to better academic outcomes.

Build stronger, in-person relationships with peers and teachers.

Develop healthier long-term habits by breaking the cycle of constant digital stimulation.

The data is clear: phones are distracting, and they're detrimental to learning and mental health. High schoolers don't need more access to phones to prove they're responsible. What they really need are supportive, structured environments that reduce digital noise and help them succeed.

A unified phone-free policy across all grade levels ensures consistency and meets the developmental needs of all students.