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Scarborough & Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Tech
LD 2212

Dear Legislators,

I am writing in strong support of a bell to bell cell phone ban in Maine Schools as part of the Supplemental Budget. This legislation is an important and necessary step toward improving the learning environment for all Maine students.

Some may ask: why does this matter need to rise to the level of legislation? Why not simply leave the decision to parents—allowing them to choose whether or not their children bring phones to school?

The answer lies in a simple but powerful concept: this is a collective action problem.

Even if I, as a parent, decide that my child should not bring a phone to school, that decision alone is not enough to shield them from the effects of widespread phone use in the classroom. My child is still distracted when the student next to them is scrolling through social media. They are still affected when others are messaging during class, recording without consent, or engaging in cyberbullying right in front of them.

Research backs this up. A study conducted by the University of Southern Maine found that the mere presence of a smartphone—even when turned off—can significantly reduce cognitive capacity. Participants who had their phones in another room significantly outperformed those who had their phones on the desk or in their pockets. This suggests that the presence of phones in the classroom can impair students' ability to focus and process information, affecting not just the phone user but those around them as well.

In other words, this isn't just a matter of personal choice—it's a public issue. And public problems require public solutions.

Legislating bell to bell bans helps level the playing field. It sets a clear, consistent standard across schools, ensuring that no student is put at a disadvantage simply because others around them are using phones in ways that disrupt teaching and learning. It also sends a broader message: that the school day should be a protected space for focus, connection, and growth—not constant digital stimulation.

We have reached a point where individual action is no longer enough. A coordinated, legislative response is needed to support the well-being and academic success of all Maine students.

I urge you to support bell to bell bans. Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to creating healthier and more effective learning environments for Maine's children.

Sincerely,
Maureen Lynes
Scarborough