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Scarborough, ME, Scarborough Alliance for Thoughtful Tech
LD 2212

Re: Support for Bell to Bell Cell Phone Bans as listed in the Supplemental Budget
Chairpersons and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the bell-to-bell cell phone restrictions included in the supplemental budget. This is an issue that needs to be addressed, and it needs to happen as soon as possible.

Many schools say they have phone bans, but in practice, most only apply during class or instructional time—leaving phones accessible during lunch, in hallways, and in bathrooms. That’s not a true ban, and experts agree it’s not enough to reduce harm.

A bell-to-bell policy is the gold standard because it covers the entire school day. This protects both learning and the social-emotional fabric of school life.

Some ask, “Why not just put phones away during class?” Research shows that even the presence of a phone reduces focus. And school is about more than academics—students need to be present to build friendships, feel a sense of belonging, and develop healthy habits.

This is also not just a benefit for students and teachers. Administrators see the impact as well. Assistant Superintendent Katie Joseph in Maine at RSU1/Bath has said that collecting phones at the start of the day actually saves time throughout the day. Principal Catrina Bailey from Dunbar High School in Ohio has shared similar results: fewer fights, fewer discipline issues, fewer social media-fueled conflicts, and an improved school culture overall.

Finally, this cannot be handled district by district. Many of us have tried, only to be dismissed or discouraged. School boards and school leaders are already stretched thin and juggling competing priorities. And too often, a loud minority creates the illusion that most parents oppose these policies, when the broader support is clearly there.

For these reasons, I urge you to support the bell-to-bell phone-free school language included in the supplemental budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Maggie Jones
parent, Scarborough, ME