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My name is Catherine Reilly and I live in Scarborough. I am in support of Part GG - a bell-to-bell ban on personal devices in Maine school.

To explain why, I'm going to share some personal details that I normally wouldn't because they could give me reasons not to support this bill.

I am a single mom with two sons, a 6th grader and an 8th grader. Half of the month my contact with them is almost exclusively through their phones. It hurts to be away from them and I fawn every text and call. I never want to miss a single one. Their middle school doesn't allow phones which means I've probably missed some texts that I'd have loved to get on days we're apart. I'm ok with that.

Another aspect of my life is that my sons' dad is an airline pilot whose schedule is different every month and every week. Our family schedule is always changing and it's often confusing. It's not uncommon for him to be delayed due to weather or cancellations. He was going to drive one of the kids somewhere but now they need to come with me to drop off their brother and then we'll go to the next place... We constantly have to coordinate with each other and the kids. There are times when it'd be helpful to contact them at school but we can't.

I'm here to tell you that we have always figured it out and my kids are better off for it. They're very good at remembering what the plan is for the day. They're flexible if it changes, and they're smart about contacting us if anything comes up. They can use their phones at the end of the day or if it's more urgent, we can call the front office. It has never been a problem.

I'm glad their school is phone-free bell-to-bell even if it makes my life a little harder. As more and more of my 13-year-old's friends have gotten phones, what I've seen worries me even more than my desire to be in touch with him.

On carpool rides or at swim meets, where they used to be boisterous, now there's a lot of quiet time with heads bent over phones. I didn't understand that dynamic before I saw it firsthand.

Next year, he will head to a high school that allows phones. This was despite a petition last year signed by 400 parents. Frankly, it would make my life easier and I'd probably get more texts for him on days we're apart. But it's not at all worth it to me. I want him to be independent and I want him to develop good social skills.

I hope you will support this bill and ban personal devices bell-to-bell. It will help kids like my sons grow into the responsible, capable adults we all want them to be. Parents like me can adjust and kids will be better off for it.

Thank you.