

Public Testimony in Support of LD 1234
An Act to Ban Cellular Telephones from Public School Classrooms

Chairpersons and members of the committee,

My name is Hannah Taylor and I am here in support of LD 1234, An Act to Ban Cellular Telephones From Public School Classrooms. I am a clinical psychologist and also the parent of two children in one of Maine's public elementary schools.

In my work as a psychologist and behavioral sleep medicine specialist, I see adults who are struggling with chronic insomnia, and in many cases other mental health concerns, as well. I see how many adults in our state are in need of mental health services and feel how in demand we clinicians are as we try to meet this need.

As a parent, I feel great concern for how smart phones and social media are altering the experience of childhood and adolescence for our kids. Their harmful impact is reflected in the significant rise in mental health concerns among our youth. I wonder how we clinicians will meet these mental health needs, both now and as these adolescents become adults, when we are already struggling to keep up.

Our kids are going to have to navigate the challenges of growing up in this world of increasing technology, but there should be clear boundaries placed around the use of phones in schools. School should be a place where children can focus on learning and have the opportunity to grow their social skills face-to-face, and where they can be free of the pressures inspired by social media. Teachers should not have to spend their classroom time policing phone use or fighting for their students' attention.

Having phone-free schools would allow our students and teachers to have a protected space where education is the priority. We need to be proactive to support the mental health of Maine youth and I believe this bill would help us do that.

Thank you for your consideration,

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