

Testimony of Katie Goodwin
In Support of LD 1234

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Katie Goodwin and I support LD 1234. I have 2 teenagers who attend Morse High School in Bath, where phones have been banned during school hours. As a community member I am very thankful for the work done by the RSU1 committee to get ahead of this issue and find a way to get cell phones out of our schools. As a parent I am grateful knowing my children are getting to experience their high school education without cellphones. I know this has only been a good experience for the school, the faculty and the students. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

There is some push back from Mainers who think this is an issue that should be implemented district to district, without a statewide law. I get that. But I think that our students have been the guinea pig generation for technology and we are seeing the BIG effects, so it's time to act BIG back at it to protect the students of Maine.

Morse High School implemented a bell to bell ban on student cell phone use and I am so grateful they did. I have good kids but I know that it was too big of an ask for them and their peers to be reasonable about cell phone use at school. It just wasn't working. I am all for high school students learning about self regulation and becoming aware of the complex relationship between their phones and their health but right now, while they are navigating it, it is not the appropriate time. They need informed adults to set these boundaries for them.

Morse students and parents found out about the phone ban during the summer and had a couple months to process what that might look like before school started fall of '24. They arrived and were shown how to use a magnetic cloth pouch to secure their phones during the school day. The impact for both students and faculty is so encouraging, I will read some feedback from the school.

- Students are interacting more- making eye contact, talking with each other, and playing games during downtimes at school
- Eliminating the need to redirect students, therefore covering more academic content
- Increased amount of work is being completed during class
- Increased amount of homework is being completed
- Bathroom trips are shorter
- There is less vaping
- Suspensions have dropped by 50%
- Students engagement at lunch has increased - it's louder, but in a good way
- Students report they are more productive during study hall
- Students report that they are not rushing to un-pouch their phones at the end of the day
- Teachers report that students are grateful for the intervention

And lastly,

- Students are sharing stories instead of staring at their phones to fill downtime in the classroom

Every weekday I am sending my students to a public school to be educated and having student cell phone use prohibited at their school has been such a gift. If there is something we can do today to help every single student in Maine and every person supporting these students, it is to pass this Bill. Thank you.