

**TESTIMONY:** LD 1234: An Act to Establish Phone-Free Schools  
**DATE:** April 16, 2025  
**ATTN:** Education and Cultural Affairs Committee  
**FROM:** Stacy Taylor, Falmouth

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**Dear Members of the Committee:**

As one of the founders of the Turn the Tide Coalition, I'm here on behalf of thousands of Maine parents who've come together to help our kids navigate—and escape—the digital mess we unintentionally handed them.

I'll be the first to admit: parenting isn't perfect. At home, our kids spend far too much time glued to screens—especially phones and iPads—isolated and disconnected. We've all seen it: a family holiday gathering where teens and tweens sit silently on the couch, each lost in their own scroll.

The academic distractions caused by cell phones are well-documented. But there's a deeper issue we're not fully confronting: our kids are losing the ability to connect and interact *in real life*.

School is one of the last protected spaces where we can actively encourage healthier habits. (Remember those 5-a-day nutrition charts?) Today, Maine teens—like their peers across the country—spend about 1.5 hours of their school day on their phones. Without meaningful guidelines, students are spending roughly *a quarter of their time in school* on personal devices—texting, scrolling social media, watching YouTube—tuned out from their teachers and classmates.

When I was growing up in the '80s, I wouldn't have dreamed of bringing a television, a boombox, a cordless phone, and an Atari game system into the classroom. So why are we allowing the modern equivalents—phones, iPads, and headphones—into the classroom every single day?

We don't need more studies. We know what's happening. We're watching it unfold.

Let me share a quick success story from my school district in Falmouth.

Last spring, Falmouth Middle School planned a field trip to Boston. Initially, students were allowed to bring devices and headphones for the long bus ride. Yes, as parents, we've all handed our kids an iPad on a long car ride—but a school trip isn't a solo experience. It's a chance to bond, laugh, play cards, and make memories.

Dozens of parents raised concerns. To their credit, the Falmouth administration quickly modified the policy. The devices stayed home—and the result? A trip full of conversation, connection, and real interaction. For one day, our kids were simply allowed to be kids.

As parents, we want to raise young adults who are socially confident, emotionally intelligent, and capable of genuine, face-to-face connection.

That's why we're advocating for a **bell-to-bell phone-free policy**—meaning no phones between classes, at lunch, during field trips... and hopefully, by extension, not at the dinner table during family holidays.

Today, you'll read testimony from RSU1 in Bath, which implemented a bell-to-bell phone-free policy this past fall. In less than a year, that district saw measurable improvements in student focus, classroom culture, and overall community well-being. Their success wasn't theoretical. It was immediate—and it was real.

If Bath can do it, so can Maine.

Our kids don't need more tech. They need more time. More face-to-face interaction. More chances to build confidence, empathy, and real social skills. They need us to be the adults in the room.

**Please support LD 1234.** Let's give our children the space to rise, to reconnect, and to thrive.

Thank you.