

## Testimony in Support of HB 2251: Restricting Cellphone Use in Schools

March 28th, 2025  
House Committee on Education

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the House Committee on Education:

For the record, my name is Kristin Bride, and I am a Social Media Reform Advocate. I have come by this role in the worst way possible. I lost my 16-year-old son, Carson to suicide on June 23, 2020, after he was viciously cyberbullied by his classmates at Riverdale High School in Portland, OR. The students were using anonymous apps to hide their identities and the last search on Carson's phone before he ended his life was for hacks to find out who was sending the over 100 harassing and humiliating messages.

In July 2021, I testified in Oregon in support of HB 2631 which requires Oregon schools to inform the parents of both the aggressor and the victim of bullying incidents. This law passed and has been nick-named "Carson's Law"  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORED/bulletins/2ef060b>

For the last 3 years, I have advocated in Washington, D.C. to pass the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) which requires social media companies to have a Duty of Care to our children when designing products targeting our kids. Unfortunately, this critical Federal legislation failed to pass out of the House last year after passing in the Senate with overwhelming bi-partisan support.

With the absence of any State or Federal legislation to keep our kids safer online, we must turn to limiting the amount of time that kids spend on these addictive and psychologically harmful devices which are designed to distract and steal their attention.

After speaking with High School principals who have piloted "Bell to Bell" phone free schools, the overwhelming benefits become obvious very quickly:

- The incidents of cyberbullying decrease as phones are not available to take photos of fellow students and mock them throughout the day.
- Students are learning necessary 1:1 interpersonal skills during lunch and recess that has eroded from excessive phone use.
- Students can develop critical time management skills and concentrate without the constant distraction of cell phones which supports academic success.
- Banning cell phone use in school helps support the growing movement of parents who are delaying social media use for their children.

I hope that Oregon will join the ever-growing list of states who are putting the health, well-being and the development of students first and ban cellphones during the school day and during after school activities.

Sincerely,

Kristin Bride  
Lake Oswego, OR  
Social Media Reform Advocate  
Parent Survivor to Carson- Forever 16

