Submitter: Kathryn Ammon

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2251

I am a grandmother to several children who attend Oregon schools and I oppose bill HB2251 for many reasons.

As a retired 911 dispatcher of 32 years, safety is a huge concern of mine. Protecting all children is my number one priority. Unfortunately, school today is not like it was years ago. There are fights, bullying, domestic violence, not to mention school shootings. I cannot count the number of times I received calls from students concerning incidents on the campus during school hours.

911 needs to speak with the first hand observer. Dispatchers often give instructions that must be carried out immediately, such as CPR, not given second or thirdhand. Withholding cell phones from students will greatly hamper emergency response when needed. Callers are the eyes and ears that dispatchers need to send the correct emergency response, whether that be a police, fire or medical response. If HB 2251 passes and phones are banned in schools, it will severely hamper response times, thus further endangering the students and emergency personnel.

The ability for students to access their phones is also reassurance for the student and parents. The students know help is a phone call away, whether it's their parent they need or professional intervention. Time is of the essence during emergencies.

Taking away kids' cellphones is drastic. Rules could be set in place to avoid unnecessary use of these phones. For example, having parents lock the phone to only allow 911 to be called, or taking phones away for the day when students use them inappropriately.

Let's not punish and endanger all kids because of a few who don't follow the rules.

Please reconsider HB2215 and put our kids safety first.