

May 11, 2025

Dear Senate Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 2251. As a parent and mental health therapist I have seen the negative impact social media and phone usage have had on my children and my clients.

I am 60 years old and I grew up in an age where the only media distraction was television. There was certainly a lot of watching Star Trek and Hogan's Heros, but there was only one TV, it was in the living room and my parents had control of when it was used. As a result the majority of my social interaction was IRL – in real life.

And certainly, there was no usage at school. (Not even computers!). It is easy enough to tune out and get distracted at school, I can't imagine how difficult it is if you have a phone in your pocket or just out of sight under the desk.

We are asking our kids to do the impossible. Their frontal lobes and self-control are not even fully developed and we think they can resist their phones in the classroom? Or at lunch? It makes no sense. And it seems patently unfair to ask teachers to try and control phone use in addition to everything they already do.

I believe that banning phones in schools is an important step. In schools that have tried it, it is improving concentration, reducing cyber-bullying and helping kids learn important social skills by forcing them to have conversations.

As it currently stands, there is some movement to limit use in the classroom, but enforcement is spotty, and phones are still prevalent at lunchtime. Is there anything more sad than a huge room of teens not talking and staring at their phones?

This is the right bill. I urge you to support it.

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