

Testimony in Support of HB 2251

Kelly Kneece, Licensed Mental Health Counselor

May 11, 2025

Senate Committee on Education

Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Kelly Kneece, and I am a licensed mental health counselor who works with adults and couples. Although I do not treat children directly, a recurring conversation in my sessions is the struggle parents face in managing their children's relationship with personal electronic devices—especially cell phones.

I frequently hear from parents and friends who have kids who are deeply concerned about their child's emotional and behavioral changes tied to phone use. Many describe emotional dysregulation immediately following extended phone or social media use—mood swings, irritability, and anxiety that seem out of proportion. Others talk about the compulsive nature of their child's phone habits: the constant urge to check the device, even when nothing new has happened; the distress when separated from it, even briefly; and the growing difficulty engaging in real-life conversations or responsibilities without that distraction.

Parents are exhausted. They are setting limits at home, but those efforts are undermined when their children have unrestricted access to phones during the school day. The result is confusion, resistance, and a feeling of helplessness.

HB 2251 offers schools and families a much-needed alignment of values. By setting a clear policy against student use of personal electronic devices during school hours, we reinforce boundaries that promote attention, emotional regulation, and meaningful social interaction. This policy sends a strong, consistent message that schools are places for learning, presence, and human connection—not digital overload.

I urge you to support this bill, not only for the benefit of students, but for the mental health of the families trying to raise them in an increasingly digital world.

Thank you for your time and dedication.

Sincerely,

Kelly Kneece

Licensed Mental Health Professional

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