

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr. Doreen Dodgen-Magee. I'm a psychologist as well as an author & researcher who has studied the impact of technology on human health for 25 years.

I've spoken with parents, teachers, and students in districts across Oregon and the country and have authored two award-winning books on the topic.

Cell phones and their accompanying apps were not made by child development experts or educators. Instead, it is widely known, within the tech world, that they are created with what is referred to as a "hidden curriculum."

This curriculum is NOT harmonious with gold standard educational curriculum.

Instead, it hijacks the user's attention, creating dependency that looks akin to addiction, effectively keeping the user in the digital space for as long as possible.

There will certainly be consequences of putting this program in action. It's important to realize, however, that there are consequences that students and educators are already facing.

The presence of, and interaction with, a cell phone in the classroom creates:

- 1) brains wired for distractibility.
- 2) deficiencies in focus abilities leading to deep critical thinking.
- 3) depression and anxiety.
- 4) lack of community.

In order to deliver very specific data on how Oregonian students, parents, and educators' feel about cell phones in classrooms, I want to highlight the data I collected while hosting discussions on this topic at the Oregon Youth Leadership Summit and from writ educators and parents at school districts across our beautiful state.

Educators in Oregon are hungry to teach...something that is nearly impossible without firm guidance and support, enabling them to keep cell phones out of their classrooms. We support our educators when we take a stand on creating the conditions for optimal learning and health at a statewide level.

The 200 young people at the Youth Summit, who reflect every region and demographic of Oregon, were clear and transparent.

They know that having their phones with them in class leads to constant multitasking, uninterrupted social media exposure, and rampant access to shortcuts to learning (think Google searches over critical thought and analysis, and AI over independent creation)

They spoke openly about how a lack of consistency in keeping cell phones out of classrooms ends up taking a toll on:

- 1) their ability to focus on one thing at a time...a task they believe would help them feel better, learn and retain more, and reach higher levels of success.
- 2) the quality of their relationships.
- 3) their mental health...something that they know is crucially tied to their ability to learn and thrive.
- 4) their safety and security, in particular in relation to images taken and shared without consent, bullying, and doxing. I've yet to work with an Oregon school that has not had major issues with all of these realities.

When even students are aware of these costs and are ready to try something new, it is absolutely time for those who can support them to act. When they are saying that having the freedom to learn without being distracted by the presence of their own and others' phones, we would be irresponsible not to act.

I believe this so firmly that I have offered to work closely with the state to craft accessible, free curriculum and programs to help set students and teachers up for success as the ban is implemented. This is important because we know that buy-in and accessible tools lead to outcomes wherein students experience the benefits of the policy more quickly.

Concerns over local control deny the reality that we are at a crisis point in terms of student mental health, ability to focus in ways that lead to learning and, eventually, graduate with the knowledge and skills they need for ALL students in Oregon.

I've been doing this work since cell phones were put in the hands of children. I read the peer-reviewed research every week. Every year we wait, our tech habits and their neurological and behavioral consequences get more entrenched. I will tell you...the time to act is NOW! The harm to children, as well as the impossibilities created for educators, by allowing the hidden curriculum of technology to be a buzzing undercurrent in the classroom. Not only does it render students incapable of tending to the academic curriculum that should be the main event, but it also robs them of opportunities to develop resilience, relationships, and healthy brains.

I urge you to bring Oregon up to date, support all Oregon educators, and give students across our state, the highest likelihood of academic success and strong mental health by passing this bill swiftly.

Psychologist

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