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**To the Honorable Members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives,**

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed legislation to restrict personal cell phone use in Rhode Island schools. As a high school English teacher with firsthand experience in the classroom, I can confidently say that unrestricted phone use is one of the most pressing obstacles to meaningful student engagement and academic success today.

Every day, I watch students struggle to focus—not because they don't care, but because they are constantly pulled into the digital world in their pockets. Phones are designed to capture and hold our attention. For adolescents, whose brains are still developing the ability to manage distractions, this is an almost impossible challenge. Even the most thoughtful lesson plans, creative activities, or emotionally resonant discussions can be undermined by a vibrating notification or the lure of a quick scroll through social media.

When schools attempt to set policies on their own, enforcement is inconsistent and difficult. A state-level policy would give schools the support they need to create environments that prioritize learning, human connection, and well-being. Just as we have laws to keep children safe in vehicles or to ensure they receive a basic education, we now need laws that reflect the realities of how technology is impacting their ability to learn.

This is not about demonizing technology—phones can be powerful tools when used with intention. But right now, they are tools of distraction, anxiety, and disengagement in the classroom. We need to help students reclaim their focus, build healthier relationships with technology, and rediscover what it means to be present in a learning community.

I urge you to vote in favor of this bill. Our students deserve schools where their attention is protected and their potential can flourish.

Sincerely,

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