

Testimony in **support** of H5598, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Hearing in the RI House Education Committee June 10, 2025

Hello Chair McNamara and Esteemed Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing in strong support of H5598, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS. I commend the many sponsors of this urgent bill, who have the insight to recognize that the use of cell phones and other hand-held wireless devices in k-12 classrooms has had a detrimental effect on Rhode Island's students—on their emotional/behavioral, physiological, neurological, and cognitive health.

Surely it has become clear that these devices do not enhance academic achievement, but detract from it. It is prudent for school districts to make decisions regarding this technology which will promote, rather than inhibit, academic as well as social/emotional growth.

Banning cell phones from classrooms has only an upside and no downside. Please pass this important bill out of committee so that it can be voted on by the entire House of Representatives. This bill needs to become law.

I would point out one issue that is not typically addressed on this topic. That is the issue of the wireless radiation emitted from classroom routers, cell phones, and all hand-held wireless devices. It is not only the time on screens and the content accessed that is problematic. All wireless devices emit radiofrequency radiation, which is harmful to the cells of all organisms. Children and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to these harms. When making policies which result in withholding cell phones from students during the school day and school activities, care should be taken to keep the cell phones off.

There is no need to abandon connectivity in order to use technology safely. Please see the TechSafe Schools organization for valuable information on ways to mitigate wireless harm in classrooms. <https://www.techsafeschools.org/administrators>

Sincerely,

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