

In Person Testimony – Proponent of HB 2421

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2421. I am a classroom teacher at Goddard High School and a mother of three children. I offer this testimony both as a concerned parent and a frustrated educator.

In my 12 years of teaching experience, I have worked in two very different environments: one with a strict, bell-to-bell, phone-free policy, and another with no consistent, schoolwide phone policy. The difference between these two settings—particularly in student engagement, social interaction, and learning retention—is striking and cannot be dismissed.

In the building where phones were not allowed, students spent passing periods and lunch socializing with peers. They arrived to class more focused, more present, and more ready to learn. In contrast, my current building is filled with students walking the halls staring at the six-inch screen that is rarely far from their hands—or their minds.

While I am permitted to set my own classroom phone policy, the effects of unrestricted phone use between classes and in other classrooms inevitably bleed into my learning environment. The moment students leave my classroom, many immediately reach for their phones to check notifications or resume scrolling through social media. This constant noise and continuous influx of information—whether for entertainment or not—is taxing on developing brains.

Our brains require downtime to process and consolidate new information. With constant access to phones, many students never experience this necessary quiet time, making it more difficult for them to retain what they have just learned. Additionally, the endless scrolling of highly stimulating content has negatively impacted students' attention spans. A study by Microsoft has shown that the average human attention span has dropped to just eight seconds. How can we realistically expect students to learn, retain, and apply new material when their focus is disrupted so frequently?

I recognize that many of these challenges extend beyond the classroom and require work at home and within our communities. However, removing phones from schools is a meaningful and immediate step we can take right now.

As a teacher, a mother, and a Kansas citizen, I urge you to support HB 2421 for the sake of our students—the future of our great state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kaitlyn Barrientos