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HB 2421 Cell Phone Ban in Schools

Neutral - In-person

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Thank you, Chairwoman and committee. My name is Ruby Backstrom, and I am representing Turner High School. I want to clarify that this testimony is not my own, but rather that of my best friend, Cierra, whose struggles I have witnessed firsthand for the past three years I have known her. She could not make it, and I share these struggles as well, so I shall present her case before you. She says, "While I agree with the committee that we need restrictions on phones, I do not believe it should be to this level, seeing as students would not be able to receive timely notifications that we would need before **2:30**, when we would expect to get our phones returned to us. **74%** of our students receive free or reduced lunch, indicating that their families struggle with financial hardship, and some students rely on their own jobs to support their families. If they need to call off or take another shift, they need to contact their job before **2:30**, since most students would go to work at **3 pm**. However, it is not just jobs that need timely notifications. Emergencies will not wait for our phones to arrive in our hands to happen. For example, last year my father had a seizure and was in the hospital for a brain bleed; one day, while I was still at school, I received a call from my mother stating that he was being rushed into surgery and that I needed to come up to the hospital. If this bill were in place, I would not have known about this surgery, and I would not have been able to see him before he went on the operating table. With Turner High School's restrictions, however, I can keep my phone by my side in case something happens, and I can make or receive emergency calls if necessary.

I will stand for questions.