

Proponent/Opponent of SB302

(Student Phones, Personal Devices)

For the Senate Education Committee

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Parent

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 302 on behalf of . . .

My students, their peers, teachers, faculty and those of future generations, I'd like to share what we should all know about safety in schools.

Our Kansas schools are and have been safe places. Over the decades districts have developed many protocols and security features. One well known feature is the use of school resource officers. An SRO is a carefully selected, specifically trained and properly equipped law enforcement officer. They are assigned to work collaboratively with schools.

Founded in 1991, the National Association of School Resource Officers offers high-quality training for SROs and school safety professionals with the goal of protecting students, faculty and staff through collaborative partnerships.

With this associations deep understanding and expertise in what SROs do day in and day out, I'd like to read a summary of their statement in support of bell to bell school phone policy. They state that...

Access to phones during the school day reduces student safety in normal and especially emergency situations.

During normal days, phone access promotes social media drama and cyberbullying and makes it easier for students to plan physical altercations, all of which hinder student safety.

During school emergencies, the risks posed by phone access during school emergencies are even greater..

During an emergency such as a school shooting, students must be completely focused on life-saving instructions.. Phones can easily distract students from hearing, understanding and reacting appropriately. Even when students use the phones to communicate with parents.

Some school emergencies require students to hide in silence to avoid being targets of violence. Sounds or light from students' phones could help an assailant locate potential victims.

School administrators and responders often rely on cell phone networks to facilitate safe responses to school emergencies. Hundreds of students using phones simultaneously could hinder essential emergency communications.

Information students communicate to parents during an emergency often prompts parents to rush to the school, creating traffic issues that hinder emergency responders.

A parent for an assailant if the parent tries to access the school building.

For all these reasons, NASRO strongly supports polices and legislation that ban cell phone access “bell to bell...”.

I am a parent, so I understand parents concerns about safety. As an older parent and person with some lived experience, I can relate to living in fear of “what might happen” rather than living in the moment and understanding how that eases anxiety not just for ourselves but those around us. I firmly believe that after schools implement this policy we will see less dependence, less anxiety and instead greater resilience, more pro-social behavior, greater safety, education and happiness in our schools.

A well known author once wrote...

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength