

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Kailey Howell and I stand before you today, not only as a senior at Spring Hill High School, but as a proud new voter. As someone who is an active participant in Speech and Debate, more specifically an event called "Congress," I would like to present to you my reasons for being in extreme opposition to this Bill.

You see, congress is an event where, as students, we read through pieces of mock legislation to get a better understanding of how this process is done in the real Congress. This bill, SB302, was the perfect way for me to analyze a real life bill and put my skills to the test. However, I will say that I do have a bias in this analysis because this bill will be affecting not only me, but also those around me.

When reading this bill, the first thing I noticed was that it was extremely broad and all encompassing. There are many reasons why this can be detrimental to the people it is going to affect, but for time sake, let me just address a few personal ones. This bill encompasses grades K-12 and while exemptions are allowed for students with medical issues, every other student must follow this policy, myself included. As a 4.0 student involved in a variety of extracurriculars, I have always prioritized my learning. Phone usage for me was always secondary to my education. While I understand that this is not the case for all students, I am confused as to why I am now having to bear the weight of consequences that were never meant for me. I've learned how to manage my time and put education first despite the distractions, phones included. Why should I now be unfairly stripped of my devices when I never did anything wrong to earn such a consequence? Education has always been what students choose to make of it. Students with positive attitudes and a desire to learn, will do so. Students who purposely avoid learning at every cost, will not learn. Removing phones doesn't change a student's attitude, it only gives them another avenue to find another distraction. Today it's phones, tomorrow it might be wireless gaming systems that my local target sells for five dollars. One distraction will always be replaced with another. Which is why this is a glaring problem of this bill. It is unfairly broad, including every student in the state of Kansas, whether they have earned this action upon them or not. Not only does it affect all of the students during the school day, but it now also gives the school boards the right to limit or ban electronic usage at what appears to be undetermined school sponsored extracurricular activities as well. This, in my opinion, is such an overreach of power.

Furthemore, my concerns are not limited to just myself and my fellow students. They lie with my teachers. As someone within the walls of a school everyday, I see how tirelessly they work for students. Despite them doing so, many students give them trouble every chance they get, making their jobs exponentially harder. Prohibiting phones in schools will only make this issue worse. Not only will teachers become police officers, keeping watch for a stray phone, but students will place the blame on them. While you and I understand that this action comes from the state, and

not individual teachers, most students will find that fact unimportant. They simply care about the messenger and enforcer, which will unfortunately become our valued teachers. These teachers will most likely be tasked with ensuring students don't possess their phones, and directing them with disciplinary action if they do. That is yet another burden placed upon them, one that you can prevent today.

Lastly, this bill does not address the consequences or costs that the school districts themselves may have to incur if they don't meet the expectations of this legislature per the bill. This broad and overreaching bill does not indicate what the penalties will be if not followed to their expectations and whether this will be tied to funding. I understand that this might come off as nitpicky, however I believe that it goes to show that a broad bill such as this, has widespread effects on our education. Today, I urge you today to consider how this bill will affect every student. Consider how it might create issues, no matter how small. Every issue this legislation creates is one more issue our valued teachers must deal with, our students will resist against and our schools boards will have to regulate. What will come next? Will you also outline the consequences each district must put into place for them to be in compliance? Will the legislature come sit in the classrooms to decide what else to police over? When will the overreach be considered too much? Please consider what this bill ultimately will do to our schools. There has to be a better way to regulate the cell phone usage if that is your desire. But for all of these reasons, I urge you to vote in the negation of this bill in its current form. Thank you for your time.