

# Testimony in Support of SB 2354

Carter Hass  
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Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Mr Chairman, Mr Vice Chairman and Honorable members of the Committee today I urge that you push a “DO PASS” recommendation for this legislation.

I go to Valley City High School, and we recently implemented a policy for phones. It consists of basic regulations, like not having your phone in the hallways or classrooms, and it also consists of typical leniency, such as allowing a phone in your study halls, open campus, or at lunch. The policy also allows students to use their phones for medical emergencies. To put it simply, we have an excellent policy. Many students initially were indifferent towards it; I was one of them, but we adapted, and its benefits truly shined. I want to point out that when it comes to phone regulation. There are immense benefits. On June 17, 2024, Yale Medicine said, “The excessive use of social media can harm teens by disrupting important healthy behaviors. Some researchers think that exposure to social media can overstimulate the brain's reward center and, when the stimulation becomes excessive, it can trigger pathways comparable to addiction.” School is no place for addiction, and by passing this bill, you can limit student access to addictive things while promoting education just like they did in my school. This legislation not only provides fantastic benefits for students, but it also promotes the rights of the parents.

Our school followed precedent as Many schools have been adapting policies like these, and what I love about this bill is its simplistic language and regulation. You tell the school districts what their policy should include while allowing them to choose how much they regulate. All school districts must have some policy, but it’s left up to the parents, the students, and the boards to decide how stiff the regulations are. The balance of power with this legislation is fair and reasonable. Easily a top reason to pass. But finally,

I want to address an argument that might be commonplace when debating technological regulation. The argument is that 21st-century technology has become an essential part of communication for everyone. Now, while I and many people can agree that technology is imperative to our students' success and communication, it, like anything else, can have adverse side effects. Its negative side effects have become so commonplace and destructive that this legislative body has taken notice. The Harvard Graduate School of Education, on August 10, 2022, reported that quote, “Allowing phones in the classroom **negatively** impacts test scores and long-term learning retention as well as performance and cognitive capacity.” There's your solid evidence. Modern problems require modern solutions. This bill also allows for communication to exist and doesn't deny the reality of communication through cellular devices. In subsection two, subdivision C, and subsection three, essential communication is protected by mandating that a student may have their phone in case of a medical condition and leaves the term “instructional time” ambiguous, meaning that each district can decide whether or not they want phones in the classroom for “ after instructional time use” or kept in the lockers for “outside of classroom use.”

From a student's perspective, the societal benefits, preservation of rights, and elimination of negative impacts within this legislation are ideal. You have our support. For those reasons, I ask you today to give a DO PASS recommendation for this legislation. Thank you.

Carter Hass.