



**HB0630 – COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION – STUDENT CELLULAR PHONE USE POLICY –
ESTABLISHMENT (MARYLAND PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS ACT)**

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WAYS AND MEANS

OPPOSE

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Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB0630 – County Boards of Education – Student Cellular Phone Use Policy – Establishment (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**.

AACPS opposes this bill which infringes upon local control of education policy regarding student use of cell phones. Local governance by boards of education is essential to a comprehensive system of public education. Retaining local board authority allows for collaboration and cooperative planning within the local community rather than through top-down decision from the State. In fact, Section 4-101 of the Education Article states, “educational matters that affect the counties shall be under the control of the county board of education,” and that local boards of education, “determine, with the advice of the county Superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system”. Local boards of education receive and rely on public input and are best able to address local needs. The relationship between the community and local public schools encourages participation by parents/guardians and other community members in the educational process so that everyone has responsibility for and ownership of public education. Retaining decision-making authority at the local level allows local boards of education to best balance educational practices, available resources to implement those practices, public input, and accountability.

Additionally, the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County and the Superintendent have already adopted a policy and regulation governing student use of cell phones, Policy JCO and Regulation JCO-RA – Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices by Students. AACPS has also adopted student cell phone guidelines which further restrict student cell phone use and prohibits the use of cell phones during instructional time. AACPS opposes this legislative proposal to circumscribe the board’s authority to establish local policy on this matter.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB0630.