

**SB928 - County Boards of Education - Student Electronic Communication Device Use Policy - Establishment (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**  
**Written Testimony (Favorable)**

Submitted By: Joshua Mathis, Maryland Resident and Parent of Two

Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is **Joshua Mathis**, and I am a **Maryland parent of two young children**. I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of SB928, which will keep personal cell phones and similar devices **out of reach during the instructional day**.

First, I want to **thank Senators Harris, Charles, A. Washington, and Carozza** for championing this important bill and for prioritizing students' learning and well-being.

I support this legislation **because of the amendments made to the cross-filed House Bill 525**. Those amendments **removed exceptions for emergency use** and added clear language to ensure that student devices are **stored and made inaccessible during the instructional day**. In my view, that clarity is essential—if devices are still accessible, the distractions (and the problems) remain.

This bill matters to our community because it helps give children the chance to learn in a **focused, healthy environment** and it limits access to **inappropriate content on school grounds**. The bill's approach is sensible and balanced:

- It establishes a **K–12 prohibition on personal devices during the instructional day**.
- It requires **mandated storage** so devices are **inaccessible**, not just “put away.”
- It allows **limited, appropriate exceptions**—including for **IEPs, 504 plans, medical needs, language tools, and caregiver-related needs**.
- It includes a **prohibition on social media use at school**, which is a critical guardrail for students' attention and safety.

As a parent, I am deeply concerned about what social media is doing to adolescents in our community—constant comparison, anxiety, distraction, and exposure to harmful content. While my children are still young, I already see how early and how powerfully these platforms shape behavior and peer dynamics. Schools should be places where students can concentrate, engage with teachers and classmates, and build healthy habits—without a device pulling them away every few minutes.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report** on SB928  
Thank you for your time and for your service to Maryland's students and families.

Sincerely,

**Joshua Mathis**

Kensington, Maryland