

SB0928\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
03/04/2026  
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**TESTIMONY ON SB#0928 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**County Boards of Education - Student Electronic Communication Device Use Policy - Establishment (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0928, **County Boards of Education - Student Electronic Communication Device Use Policy - Establishment (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**

Close Up Washington D.C. has analyzed the issue of *The Rise and Impact of Phone Bans in U.S. Public Schools*<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, cell phones have moved from novelty to necessity in daily life, but in U.S. public schools, they've also become a battleground. Facing growing concerns about distraction, mental health, and safety, state legislatures and school boards across the country are implementing bans on student phone use during the school day. Supporters say the restrictions restore focus in the classroom and encourage healthier habits; critics worry the rules go too far, limiting freedom and complicating emergency communication. As of 2025, at least 35 states have enacted some form of restriction on student cell phone use...

Research on cell phone bans shows mixed—but as supporters note, promising—results. Some studies link reduced phone use to better academic performance and improved mental health among students.<sup>5</sup> Teachers often report fewer disruptions and incidents of cyberbullying when phones are removed from the classroom, and parents in advocacy groups see restrictions as a way to build healthier digital boundaries for teens. In some cases, schools also report stronger peer-to-peer interaction, as students spend more time engaging face-to-face.<sup>6</sup> Supporters of cell phone bans argue that these benefits are worth the trade-off...As Emily Boddy of Smartphone Free Childhood notes, “If kids know that there are other kids who have access to their phones ... there’s always a part of their attention that’s like, ‘What am I missing on Snapchat?’”<sup>8</sup> For advocates, bell-to-bell bans offer relief from that constant anxiety.

This bill will require each county board of education to develop and implement, not later than the 2027-2028 school year, a policy limiting the use of certain electronic communication devices by a student during the academic school day; and prohibiting the policy from restricting the use of an electronic communication device for purposes documented in a student's individual education program, to address a documented health issue, during an emergency event, for certain educational purposes, to access language translation tools, or to meet caregiving duties.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0928.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.closeup.org/public-schools-phone-bans/>