

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB928

Student Electronic Communication Device Use Policy – Establishment (Maryland Phone–Free Schools Act)

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Date: March 2, 2026

Position: Support

Good afternoon,

My name is Jacqueline Alyea and I am a School Counselor at Owings Mills High School and parent of a student in BCPS. I support Senate Bill SB928 Student Electronic Communication Device Use Policy – Establishment (Maryland Phone–Free Schools Act).

Over the last ten years of working with high school students I have seen an extreme increase in phone use. It would be difficult to find a person who works in the school system and has not seen phones as a problem. Our district put forward phone restrictions during class this year, but the implementation has been difficult to enforce without clear parameters. Students need to consistently have their phones physically away and without the possibility of distraction. We know that adolescent brains are often not capable of the self control required to be off their phones. It is time for the adults to step in and remove the temptation. A bill this strong would make it easier for teachers to enforce technology restrictions.

Two years ago our school did a screen time reduction challenge. According to data self-reported from students, kids were on their phones an average of 7.7 hours a day. 14% of students reported screen times of over 12 hours a day, with the highest screentime exceeding 18 hours a day. We know too much about the impact of phone usage on developing brains to allow students to use phones as much as they are able to.

I recognize the pushback this bill would likely receive from students and potentially families, but the benefits far outweigh the negatives. As a school staff person and parent of a school-aged child, I ask for a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on SB928.

Jacqueline Alyea

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