

Testimony: Written by Mia Minor
Committee: Ways and Means Committee
Hearing: April 1, 2026, Senator Harris Bill:
SB928: County Boards of Education - Student Electronic Communication Device Use
Policy - Establishment (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)- Favorable

Thank you to the Ways and Means Committee for allowing me to share my family's story today. Also, I want to thank the legislation for introducing Bill SB0928 (Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act),

My name is Mia Minor, and my husband, Todd Minor, and I are providing a written testimony to explain the importance of why this bill is important. We are the parents of Matthew E. Minor, who we lost to a viral and harmful online social media challenge in March 2019. To keep Matthew's legacy alive, raise awareness of these deadly online harms, and drive social media change, we established a foundation to promote online safety, well-being, and community awareness. We are residents of Prince George's County, Maryland.

In 2024, HB603 and SB 571, "MD Kids Code," were unanimously passed by the Maryland legislature and signed by Governor Moore, because keeping our kids safe matters in Maryland.

Since then, we have worked tirelessly & traveled to raise awareness about these apps that continue to keep our children mentally tethered to their devices and games. It is addictive and controls their mental health stability and well-being.

This month, my husband was in Los Angeles, California, showing support to our fellow grieving families who have suffered at the hands of Harmful algorithms that are created to produce continued scrolling & engagement in our youth, and he was in Washington DC talking to representatives about how important the Kids Online Safety bill is. While Todd was away, I provided testimony for Delegate Bofo's House Bill 525 for the Maryland Phones Free Act.

Last weekend, we talked to the South Community Economic Development, sharing our son Matthew's loss and the harmful online harms that affect online space, and how these devices are a distraction to our school system. Also, explaining how I sheltered my children from problems in the outside world, not realizing that similar issues—such as cyberbullying, which deeply affected my son before his death—would be a rising online problem for our children.

According to the Pew Research Center, "Cyberbullying is just one of the online harms that plague our schools and has increased substantially by more than half, 46% U.S. teens aged 13-17 have been bullied, and 22% reported being bullied on apps, and 50% online gaming, a harm my son was a victim of, also." No child should be forced to have a phone or a social media app because their school or any extra-curricular activity requires it, especially given the proven harmful - and sometimes deadly effects - of social media use.

- Smartphone use has led to **significant academic harms**, which caused a historic decline in students' test scores, and having a smartphone in a room causes a decrease in academic performance, even more so if the phone is easily accessible. Also, smartphones have caused significant health issues, mentally and physically.
- **Teachers overwhelmingly want a full-day ban** - they are on the front lines and have been seeing the negative impacts on students' mental health, learning, and their ability to manage the classrooms for years. In a [National Education Association poll](#) of 2,889 educators, 83% of educators support an all-day ban.
- **Bottom Line:** Children need an oasis during the school day when their brains can learn free of the harms of digital media. This is absolutely critical to their development and has lifelong impacts on themselves and society.
- This March 7th marks the anniversary of our lovely son Matthew's passing. His **angelversary**, as we call it, is especially hard since this is the same month as my husband's birthday, and things will never be the same since this tragedy. What a present it would be to honor Matthew by passing this much-needed bill. I am asking that you pass this legislation in our children's best interests and for their future in our wonderful and beloved state of Maryland, favorable with amendments to have the same language as the house bill Delegate Boafos Bill HB525 for the storage language. I appreciate your time.



Maryland Phones Free Schools Act

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The Sentinel Newspaper

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