

HB0755\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/18/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

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**TESTIMONY ON HB#/0755- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

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**County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use Policy -  
Establishment (Phones Away for the School Day Act)**

**TO:** Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0755, County Boards of Education - Student Personal Electronic Device Use Policy - Establishment (Phones Away for the School Day Act)**

As reported by the Institute of Education Sciences *More than Half of Public School Leaders Say Cell Phones Hurt Academic Performance*<sup>1</sup>

“The latest School Pulse Panel data underscore that school leaders see cell phones as more than just a classroom distraction,” said NCES Commissioner Peggy Carr. “With 53 percent of school leaders reporting negative impacts of cell phone use on academic performance, and even more citing negative impacts on students’ mental health and attention spans, schools are facing a critical issue. Schools are responding with practical solutions, like banning or restricting phone use.”

As reported in NEA today<sup>2</sup>

“It seems that everyone—including parents—agree that excessive phone use is detrimental to teenagers,” says Cassandra Dorn, a high school teacher in Red Bank, New Jersey. “We know about the negative effects on academic performance and mental health. Yet, as a society, we really haven’t had the collective will to address the problem.”

This bill will create a unified response for all Maryland public schools. It will accomplish this goal by requiring each county board of education to develop and implement, not later than the 2026-2027 school year, a policy prohibiting the use of a personal electronic device by a student during school day hours; providing the policy may not prohibit a student from using a personal electronic device for any purpose related to an individualized program or 504 plan; providing that any disciplinary measures adopted as part of the policy may not include suspension or expulsion solely for violation of the policy; etc.

Maryland needs to support our students mental health and educational outcomes by removing the harmful effects of technology that distracts those students from learning.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0755.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ies.ed.gov/learn/press-release/more-half-public-school-leaders-say-cell-phones-hurt-academic-performance>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/take-cellphones-out-classroom-educators-say>