

02/05/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0163- POSITION: FAVORABLE

County Boards of Education - Student Technology Use Policy - Requirements

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#/0163, County Boards of Education - Student Technology Use Policy - Requirements

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

“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 today²

“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 a county board of education to develop and adopt a policy on the use of personal electronic devices during school hours; requiring the policy to restrict or limit the use of personal electronic devices by students during school hours, except for any purpose documented in the student's education program or Section 504 plan, to monitor or address a student's health issue, or for certain educational purposes; requiring the policy to be published on the county board's website and in student handbooks; etc. Maryland can and should respond to the problem.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0163.

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

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