



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 408</b>		DATE: <b>2/5/2025</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 11:28 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

**I am in Support of this Bill. I Support Local Control and Local Decision-Making.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEFF WOLMAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>wolmanj@msdr9.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 9:36 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

This is a useful step forward in trying to curb cell phone usage in school that causes reduction in productive learning time, bullying issues, and numerous other issues that teachers and staff need to be dealing with daily. As long as all decisions needed for this bill remain in a local control environment with the school district and its board, then this will be something I can support. Without that local control piece, then it cannot be something I will support. Hopefully this bill and the other two bills can be combined in a committee substitute that has the best items from all.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JERE HOCHMAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>jhstlny@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 12:10 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

This a government overreach, but understandable to establish it as long as schools determine their policy. This is a problem. Bigger problem is cell use in halls and lunch and the content of much of those communications. Ask principals! I do not think discipline should be included. That is up to schools how to handle it. Legislation should just require there are regulations no devices in classes. Can't go without stating the irony or statement being made here. You are going to legislate not allowing cell phones in classrooms but won't legislate no guns carried on the sidewalk outside of the school.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JULIE HOLLAND</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>juliaholland9@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/4/2025 4:38 PM</b>

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**Teachers need support from district admins with a consistent policy and disciplinary action regarding phone use in schools. It shouldn't be solely on the shoulders of teachers to enforce.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MIKE HARRIS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>615-202-3579</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE: <b>GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>222A MADISON STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>mharris@msta.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 11:40 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>SCOTT MCMASTERS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>scotty.mcm93@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/31/2025 1:06 PM</b>

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**Conditionally supported provided that this bill also offers guidance and protections for students and staff in emergency situations.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BRENDAN M. COONEY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>brendancooney@joplinschools.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/31/2025 11:58 AM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

This testimony is submitted in opposition to HB306, HB 408, and HB 854 that are aimed at regulating student use of personal internet connected devices in schools. I am opposed on the grounds that these bills are not restrictive enough. As an English teacher of 18 years (the last 11 at Joplin High School) I can attest that as long as students are allowed to have the device on their person and not sequestered in either a locker or Yondr pouch they will find ways to interact with them, and their attention on instruction or even just social interaction will be divided. A new societal norm is now in order: All schools must now be phone free spaces. This includes instructional time, of course, but also passing periods and lunch. Tech addiction is very palpably having a deleterious effect on student social skills and general mental wellbeing. Eight uninterrupted hours a day of phone-free time is what we must achieve for all of our students. Some of you may already be familiar with the work of social psychologist Dr. Jon Haidt. He is the person who is currently leading this conversation most prominently. His latest post on his Substack--AfterBabel--details the ways in which phone restriction policies should, and should not, be implemented. Model legislation to promote "DISTRACTION FREE" (not just phone free) education is included in this post: <https://www.afterbabel.com/p/how-to-and-how-not-to-mandate-phone> Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further testimony.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MELISSA BARNES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>mbarnes2703@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/30/2025 1:43 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**Students are easily distracted by electronic devices. As a parent of a middle schooler, I believe that cell phones should not allowed to be in school. They are there to learn not be distracted by phones.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>MICHAEL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>libertytree.cottage976@passinbox.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 2:13 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

**I OPPOSE HB 408!**      This bill is an unnecessary intrusion on local control.      I'm not aware of any state statute that currently prohibits schools from regulating and restricting the use of cell phones, smart watches, or any other type of personal electronic communication device in the school. Since schools are already allowed to restrict such items, I don't think it's necessary for the state to mandate that they restrict such items. This is an issue that should be left to schools to decide for themselves.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>AMANDA EDENFIELD</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>asedenfield@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/4/2025 7:27 AM</b>

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These kinds of decisions should be left to the Local Educational Agency to determine and implement.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>BRANDT SHIELDS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-208-7879</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>2100 I-70 DR. SW</b>		
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65203</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-600-6018</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI EQUITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP</b>		TITLE: <b>PAL TEAM LEADER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 1352</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. CHARLES</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63302</b>
EMAIL: <b>dlb@missouriequity.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/5/2025 1:48 PM</b>	

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The Missouri Equity Education Partnership would offer language to address a concern we have about this bill. HBs 306 (Steinhoff), 408 (Gragg) and 854 (Lewis) We emailed Rep. Steinhoff with it yesterday but want to put it on the record. The exceptions to cell phone use omit ELL students who can be offered the accommodation of a translation device. In recent classroom practice, this device as been students' personal cell phones for several reasons: they are accustomed to using their phones for this purpose outside of school so can operate it quickly and efficiently, and choose the app that best fits individual needs; schools do not have to provide a separate device or app service; students can have it for needs that arise outside classrooms where language barriers might exist like passing time, the cafeteria, etc. Federal law provides for such accommodation and is supported by case law in Lau v. Nichols (1974), which established the requirement for districts to create a Lau Plan as a working, evolving document outlining how ELL needs will be met. We suggest amending the legislation by adding the language below according to which bill moves forward, or is the primary bill in a committee sub:In HBs 306 and 854 on page 2, after line 22; in HB 408, pg 2 after line 24. d. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) regarding English Language Learners as defined in the ESEA Section 3201 or 20 U.S.C. § 6812



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JULIE MOUSER-DEARMOND</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>juliemouser@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/3/2025 12:48 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

My children attend a large district in St. Louis County. Two years ago, two of my children were in high school. There was a threat at their school, and it was locked down. One of my children was in the cafeteria for lunch when this happened. The other was in a classroom. Classrooms were evacuated calmly. In the cafeteria--there was panic. My daughter called me as students ran through the front entrance. She and her friends ran together as I heard sirens in the background. They were told to leave campus as the threat was perceived to be real. She had her car keys with her, so she and many friends piled into her car. They evacuated to a nearby parking lot where they took turns using my daughter's phone to call their families and tell them what was happening. An hour later, when my child had dropped off her friends at their houses and was safely at home, we received communication from the district telling us what happened and giving us a window of time to come pick up belongings that were abandoned. The ONLY reason that I knew what was going on was because my children had their phones on them when this occurred. The only reason my daughter's friends were able to contact their families was because my daughter had her phone with her. I understand that the building officials had to evacuate and could not facilitate actions that would call and alert all of the families at the school. The school has an enrollment of over 2000 students. They do not have the capacity to immediately contact all families. The only way that was possible was through the use of children's electronic devices. Until you can assure me that there will not be a shooting at my children's schools, they will have personal communication devices on them at all times. There was another instance when there was an ice storm in the middle of the school day. My elementary child called me on her personal device to ask how we wanted her to get home. My middle school child was not allowed access to his phone. It took us over 90 minutes to get through to his school because of the limited phone lines. One more story--I am being treated for breast cancer. My middle school child was anxious when I underwent chemotherapy because I was often VERY sick when he left in the morning. He would text me to check in on me sometimes during the day. To be frank, he was worried that I would die while he was at school, and the text messages assured him that I was still alive. For additional context, I am a teacher of over 20 years. Sometimes children use things inappropriately. Children often flush things down the toilet and it damages the plumbing. Do we remove toilets from schools, or do we teach appropriate usage? We should not punish kids who are appropriate with their phones.