



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 854</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>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**  
**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>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LARA WAKEFIELD</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>wakefieldconsultationservices@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>1/30/2025 4:38 PM</b>	

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

My name is Dr. Lara Wakefield and I'm advocate that assists families in Missouri navigate special education issues with their school district. I support this bill. Thank you for including the exception sections in lines 12-22. I've had situations over the years where school districts remove a child's personal AAC device or other personal electronic support devices (headphones, music playing devices for calming) claiming that school board policy allows the teacher to remove it. Even when we have protections in place in the student's IEP stating these items can't be removed, the school staff will reference MSBA policy EHBA as their reason to remove. Including these exception clauses in the bill adds more protections for students with disabilities. Sincerely, Lara Wakefield



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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>

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

**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>MARY CREMER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>marycremerjc@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/2/2025 7:35 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		

This does not need to be in state statutes. Let the schools decide on what their policy will be. Kids with Type 1 Diabetes have sensors that send messages to their cell phones, along with other family members or even teachers. The app allows you to set alarms of notifications of blood sugar levels, when high or low. These are life saving devices, and alerts kids that a correction may need to be made. Parents that also get the alerts, can text the child and check on them. Many of these kids can be shy, and not feel like breaking the rules, or asking for exceptions. Also, there are kids that have anxiety/panic attacks and need to contact parents, to continue with their day. Some schools have counselors, but some do not. The burden then falls on the school nurse, if one is present. While the phones may seem like a distraction, they can be the lifeline a child needs. We do not need the state to make blanket decisions. Let the schools decide, as each school is different.



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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 854!**      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>

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

**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>	

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

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