



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: SB 68		DATE: 3/26/2025
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 11:45 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am in Support of this Bill and mandating that all Missouri Schools honestly Report all unsafe situations and threats to Schools to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These Reports and information must be made easily available to any Missourian on the Department's Website. The Public Has a Right-To-Know and be made aware of and informed of information or threats being made to Schools, Personnel or Students.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JORDAN ZAKERY		PHONE NUMBER: 217-358-2741	
REPRESENTING: EXCELINED IN ACTION		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR- EXCELINED IN ACTION	
ADDRESS: 1350 N. MERIDIAN STREET			
CITY: INDIANAPOLIS		STATE: IN	ZIP: 46202
EMAIL: jordan@excelined.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/24/2025 10:52 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Dear House Education Committee, My name is Jordan Zakery, Legislative Director for ExcelinEd in Action. Our organization works with state lawmakers and partner organizations to pass legislation that empowers families with educational opportunity, prepares students for college and career, prioritizes early literacy grounded in the science of reading, expands innovation and strengthens school performance. I am writing to express ExcelinEd in Action's support for SB 68, which would limit distractions in the classroom from the first bell to the last bell by prohibiting the use of personal electronic communication devices for public schools and public charter schools in Missouri. SB 68 allows for exceptions to the rule in the case of an emergency and for students with an IEP instructing them to use an electronic device. The rise of cell phone use has been linked to adverse outcomes for young people, particularly impacting their experiences inside the classroom. The constant barrage of notifications disrupts the classroom environment and, as a result, student learning. Evidence from both pre-pandemic and post-pandemic studies suggests that the decline in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores since 2012 correlates with a rise in screen time for students. With both parents and teachers expressing widespread concerns about the detrimental effects on student attention, emotional development and mental health, policymakers must address these issues in order to foster educational environments that are free from harmful distractions. SB 68 would help Missouri take a crucial step toward this goal. Research has increasingly sounded the alarm on the negative effects that excess screen time and ready access to social media platforms are having on adolescents. As an organization that centers students in all that we do, we believe this bill will improve education outcomes. We urge you to pass SB 68 to strengthen the education of Missouri's students. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this important policy. Respectfully, Jordan Zakery
Legislative Director, Midwest Region ExcelinEd in Action



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: OTTO FAJEN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3202	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI NEA		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1810 E. ELM ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: libertytree.cottage976@passinbox.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/21/2025 1:58 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo. I OPPOSE SB 68.		



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BRANDT SHIELDS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-208-7879	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 2100 I-70 DR. SW			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65203
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH BRUSH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-600-6018	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI EQUITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1352			
CITY: ST. CHARLES		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63302
EMAIL: dlb@missouriequity.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 1:43 PM	

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The Missouri Equity Education Partnership has a concern about SB 68 (Henderson) and cannot support this bill as currently written. The exceptions to cell phone use omit ELL students who can be offered the accommodation of a translation device. The IDEA would NOT cover ELL students because needing to learn English is *not* a disability. In recent classroom practice, students' personal cell phones are a good choice for services like translation 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 in section 162.207, page 5 after line 59 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. In lieu of that, we want to place into our record the preference of HCS/HB 408/306/854 because it is more inclusive and follows federal law/guidelines. We believe in local control as well.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JERE HOCHMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: jhstlny@gmail.com		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/26/2025 3:07 PM
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I support this bill; however, that is contingent on final language and guidelines for implementing. IF reporting of incidents of credible threats, weapons, and other incidents in that category are reported, it can be informative and transparent to the public. IF it includes lesser incidents that behavior incident no matter how extreme (fights, out of control student, and others), then I oppose. That category is broad and can/will be interpreted differently district by district. Data will not be comparable across districts and data can/will be portrayed differently. PHONES. 1. School by school policy and guidelines. 2. They do not belong ON in classrooms unless when teachers have constructive uses in some classrooms or lessons. With that guideline, schools should TEACH MEDIA DECENCY along with anti-bullying and other misuses of language. It is as valuable as teaching health and safety and the Bill of Rights. PARENT "education" is essential. Rationale: Phone cause lack of concentration and nuisance if on in classrooms. HALLS and FREE TIME are the problem as social media flies and creates instant communication to dozens by one student. Often those communications instigate significant situations of bullying, hurtful gossip, distribution of inappropriate communications.