



Oral opposition testimony on

HB 2641

Requiring school districts to prohibit the use of privately owned electronic communication devices during school hours.

By

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To

House Education Committee

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Chair Thomas and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 2641. KASB's member-adopted legislative resolutions provide:

We support management of public schools under locally elected boards of education, including setting curriculum, staffing, financial management, and policies

Our member-adopted permanent policies further provide:

As the constitutional authority charged with the management of local schools, the school board is accountable to district patrons through the electoral process and must be the final authority on local management decisions

We recognize the importance of addressing the impact of cell phones and other electronic communication devices on students, both from an academic and from a wellness perspective. And while we appreciate the concerns behind this bill, we must oppose this legislation.

As clearly expressed by our members, these are exactly the kind of policy decisions that

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local boards of education are constitutionally charged with making. Local boards already have all the power and authority they need to craft and implement the kinds of policies regarding the use of electronic communication devices in their classrooms and other district facilities that are called for in this bill. The Legislature does not need to act in this area, nor should it.

With 286 districts in Kansas, serving remote, rural areas to densely populated urban centers, local boards are not only constitutionally charged with this responsibility but also are best equipped to craft policies and make decisions to support students' and families' needs. And boards *are* using this power and authority to address these concerns. This bill not only orders boards to act in this area, but it orders them to act in a prescribed way with a specific set of policy provisions. By doing so, it oversteps into local boards' responsibilities and removes the opportunity for parent, educator, student, and community collaboration and input to tailor such policies to districts' specific needs and circumstances.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the committee to oppose this bill.

Thank you.

***KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools.
We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.***