



**STATE OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**House Committee on Education**

Friday, February 21, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325

**Measure: House Bill 1343 HD1, Relating to Education**

**Purpose of Measure:**

Requires the Board of Education to adopt a policy that bans the use of phones and related devices by students during school hours. Effective 7/1/3000.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Education (Board) supports the intent of House Bill 1343 HD1, and appreciates the Legislature's concern.

The Board recognizes the importance of fostering an environment conducive to our students' learning, and the significant impact of cell phones and such devices on our lives.

Currently, policies regarding cell phone and device use are implemented at the discretion of the individual schools. The Board oversees curriculum as part of its constitutional and statutory authority to set statewide education policy, and believes a Board policy would allow for consistent implementation for schools across the state.

A Board-level policy would also allow for the nimbleness needed to respond to the speed of technological advances.

The Board previously debated banning cell phones in public schools statewide, but opted not to after members voiced concern about students being able to access phones during an emergency.

Policies that have been implemented across the nation range from a complete ban on cell phones, and blocking access to social media platforms during the school day, to providing pouches in which students can safely store their phones during class time, and allowing teachers to make exceptions for use of phones for educational purposes.

The Board is again looking at a policy and recognizes the many considerations that must be balanced in the formulation of such a policy. We note that the Board's process for policy development requires public engagement to ensure the consideration of stakeholder input.

We would support a resolution that encourages the Board's work to develop a policy, and requires the Board to report to the Legislature on progress made.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Board.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.  
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto  
Deputy Managing Director

## County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

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TO: Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D., Mayor

DATE: February 20, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB1343, HD1, RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my **strong support** for House Bill 1343, HD1, for the proposed ban on the use of cell phones and related devices by students during school hours aims to create a more focused and equitable learning environment.

Limiting the use of these devices ensures students remain fully engaged in learning activities, which has been shown to improve academic performance and classroom participation. Removing distractions helps foster an environment where students can focus on their education without interruptions.

Additionally, the ban addresses equity concerns, as not all students have access to the latest devices, which can create feelings of exclusion. A phone-free policy ensures a more level playing field for all students. Evidence from similar policies in other districts shows positive outcomes, including increased engagement and reduced behavioral issues.

A gradual implementation of this policy, with clear exceptions for emergencies or educational purposes, will allow schools, parents, and students to adapt effectively.

By prioritizing focus, safety, and equity, this policy aims to enhance both the academic and social experience of Hawaii's students.

Mahalo for your time and consideration

**HB-1343-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 1:53:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2025 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ruth Love           | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Ban all phones, watches with computers, iPad, ear buds. Ensure that all school computers do not have social media like X, Tic tok, Meta, chatgpt, Instagram etc

Thank you

Mrs Ruth Love

**HB-1343-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 9:41:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2025 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jacob Wiencek       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I am very glad to see this crucial bill move through the legislative process. An abundance of research continues to demonstrate the significant negative impacts of unrestricted cell phone use by adolescents in school settings.

Our Board of Education sadly does not understand the research and continues to dither in formulating a proper response. I am enthusiastic the legislature is FINALLY moving on this subject. I STRONGLY urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

**HB-1343-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 11:06:46 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/21/2025 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Dara Yatsushiro     | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Standing in STRONG SUPPORT of our teachers, respect for their authority and the integrity of their classroom environment!