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## School cellphone ban passes Pennsylvania Senate: "We want our students focused on learning"

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A bill that would ban students from using their cellphones in school was sent to the Pennsylvania House after passing in the Senate Tuesday.

The bipartisan "Bell-to-Bell" bill would establish statewide standards for public schools and bar students from using their phones any time they are in school, not just during instructional periods.

Democratic state Sens. Vincent Hughes and Steve Santarsiero, who represent parts of Montgomery, Philadelphia and Bucks counties, sponsored the bill with Republican Sen. Devlin Robinson, who represents part of Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania.

"This bell-to-bell legislation will help both students and teachers get the most out of the school day," Hughes said. "We want our students focused on learning and socializing, not glued to their screens. And we want our teachers focused on educating students, not policing the use of cell phones and fighting for their attention."

According to the bill's sponsors, [Senate Bill 1014](#) would let school districts decide how to implement and enforce the bell-to-bell standard, including where cellphones would need to be stored during the day.

The legislation includes exceptions for students with certain medical conditions those with individualized education plans that require a personal communication device, English as a second language learners who need phones to help translate, teachers using phones as an instructional tool when approved by principals and single-day occasions like field trips or science fairs.

"Our classrooms should be places for learning, not constant notifications," Robinson said. "This bill gives students the freedom to focus, connect with peers and protect their mental health from the pressures of social media."

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro reiterated last month his desire for the General Assembly to send school cellphone ban legislation to his desk for a signature.

"Students need to spend time focused on learning, on socializing with their peers and on developing the critical skills they'll need later in life," Shapiro wrote in a social media post on Jan. 29.

"I'm calling on the State Legislature to send a bill to my desk requiring our schools to implement policies that take cellphones and mobile devices out of kids' hands from the time they start class until the time they leave for home – helping teachers and kids focus on learning," the post continued.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association, the state's largest teachers union, celebrated the bill's passage.

"PSEA commends the state Senate for passing this bill establishing a consistent, statewide expectation that public schools must restrict possession and prohibit use of mobile devices for all students during the school day," PSEA Vice President Jeff Ney said in part in a statement.

"Pennsylvania's educators have long known that easy student access to personal smartphones, smartwatches, and tablets is a problem in our public schools. These mobile devices disrupt classroom lessons, distract students from learning, and facilitate cyberbullying."

Senate Bill 1014 was referred to the House Education Committee on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026.

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