



Representative Tom Young
Ohio House District 37

Representative Phil Plummer
Ohio House District 39

House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
House Bill 485 – Sponsor Testimony
Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 485. This legislation seeks to expand upon the provisions passed into law in House Bill 250 that limits students cell phone usage in our public K-12 schools.

Increased usage of social media has led to a drastic increase in depression, anxiety, bullying, and suicidal ideation among teenagers in addition to a steady decline in academic performance. The use of electronic devices by students, has also led to an increase in disruptions and distractions within the classroom. Our legislation would require all K-12 school districts to enact an electronic device and social media usage policy that makes sense for their district. This policy would need to be filed with the Department of Education and Workforce by beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. These policies would need to prevent access to social media apps or websites such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, X, etc. on the school internet unless it is for

educational purposes and authorized by a teacher or administrator. This legislation excludes electronic learning devices and those required for IEPs, health care, and students with developmental disabilities.

The policy must also include a specific plan for limiting students access to electronic communication devices during the school day and list the times and days the school would allow access to these items. A set of written and specific consequences must also be included in this new policy. Additionally, our legislation would require school districts, if they currently do not have an instructional plan in place, to provide instruction for students in grades 6-12 on the social, emotion, and physical effects of social media. This curriculum should include:

1. The negative effects of social media on mental health, including addiction;
2. The distribution of misinformation on social media;
3. How social media manipulates behavior;
4. The permanency of sharing materials online;
5. How to maintain personal security and identify cyberbullying, predatory behavior, and human trafficking on the internet; and
6. How to report suspicious behavior encountered on the internet

I should note in this legislation we define “personal wireless communication device” as any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, including cellular telephones, tablet computers, laptop computers, gaming devices, smart watches, and headphones, but excludes devices provided to a student by a school district or school.

Hopefully, we can reverse these negative trends and improve the educational experience for all of those in our schools. Thank you for your time and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.