



March 26, 2025

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson & McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brent Barry, and I serve as the Superintendent of the Phoenix-Talent School District. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in strong support of House Bill 2251 with the -3 amendment.

The -3 amendment aligns this legislation with a more thoughtful and locally informed approach that empowers school districts to determine how personal electronic devices—especially cell phones—are used during the school day. Specifically, it requires school districts to adopt their own policies that at a minimum limit the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time, while also allowing for reasonable exceptions such as emergency situations or use tied to a student’s IEP or 504 plan.

This approach strikes the right balance. It sets clear expectations that phones should not interfere with learning, while still recognizing that local school boards and educators are best positioned to develop policies that reflect the unique needs of their students and communities.

Phoenix-Talent Schools leadership teams are actively addressing this issue. Our middle schools have already implemented a bell-to-bell cell phone ban, and at the high school level, student use is only allowed during lunchtime. These policies were developed by students and are tailored to support both learning and developmental needs within our specific school community.

A statewide, one-size-fits-all mandate would risk undoing effective local solutions or creating unintended burdens. Instead, HB 2251 -3 supports local decision-making while establishing a floor for instructional time protections, ensuring students are focused during class without cutting off access to technology when it’s truly needed.

We strongly support HB 2251 with the -3 amendment and urge your YES vote to give school districts the flexibility and responsibility they need to do what’s best for students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brent Barry
Phoenix-Talent Schools, Superintendent