

FOCUS ON LEARNING



Cell phones are the leading distraction for students in school. The Focus on Learning Act will be a major step in ensuring students have the best possible learning environments.

THE PROBLEM:

- Since 2012, test scores have steeply declined nationwide, presumably correlated with the increased presence of cell phones in school.
- Recent studies show that three-quarters of U.S. teens feel more happy/peaceful when they are away from their phones.
- As research is being conducted in scholarly settings, there's a gap in data on the real-time effects of cell phone usage in classrooms and its impact on the learning and mental health of students.

FOCUS ON LEARNING SUMMARY:

- The bill would require the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to complete a study on the effects of cell phone use in K-12 classrooms on students' mental health and academic performance.
- The bill authorizes \$5 million annually for the next five years for a pilot program that provides students with secure containers to store phones during school hours.
- ED will gather input from parents, students, and educators when selecting pilot program locations.
- Participating schools will have exceptions for students with health conditions, disabilities, and non-English speakers.
- Participating schools will have a communication system in place to allow teachers, students, and administrators to communicate with local emergency responders in the case of an emergency.
- U.S. Senators Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) are cosponsors of the Senate companion Focus on Learning Act.

ORIGINAL COSPONSORS:

Reps. Bruce Westerman (AR-04), David Trone (MD-06), Jake LaTurner (KS-02), Jason Crow (CO-06).