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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 5035**

#### ***AN ACT REQUIRING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO BAN CELLULAR PHONES IN THE CLASSROOM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill bans public school students from accessing their wireless communication devices on school property during the school day, with certain exceptions. It also prohibits these students from accessing social media using the school's Internet during the school day, unless doing so is permitted for instructional purposes.

Under the bill, students' devices must be turned off and stored in the way the local or regional board of education ("school board") determines, such as in a student's locker or a specified location. School boards must develop policies to implement the bill's prohibitions and notify parents and students about the policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027

#### **SCOPE OF BAN**

The bill prohibits viewing, wearing, or otherwise using "wireless communication devices" to communicate, access the Internet, or play games, or for any other function commonly associated with the devices. It applies to portable, wireless devices capable of providing data communication between two or more parties, including cell phones, tablets, computers, gaming devices, and smart watches.

The bill's restrictions apply during school days, meaning the period between the scheduled start and end times of the days listed in the school board's academic calendar.

#### ***Exceptions to the Ban***

Under the bill, the ban does not apply to any technology the school district provides to students for instructional purposes. It also does not

apply when:

1. students are permitted to use personal devices for instructional purposes;
2. a student requires access to a device under an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan; or
3. the device is necessary for a student's health or well-being, as determined by a physician, physician's assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

### **BOARD POLICIES**

The bill requires school boards to develop policies and procedures implementing the bill's requirements. These must include procedures for (1) communication between school boards and students' parents and guardians in the event of an emergency that happens during the school day and (2) discipline for violating the bill's ban on accessing devices or social media.

Under the bill, school boards must annually notify students' parents and guardians about these policies and procedures as well as include them in the school district's student handbook.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### ***Related Bill***

sHB 5149, favorably reported by the Education Committee, similarly bans students from using mobile electronic devices during the school day.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29    Nay 16    (03/16/2026)