

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 696**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

*Adam J. Scanlon*

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing a commission regarding phones in schools.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Adam J. Scanlon</i>	<i>14th Bristol</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 696**

By Representative Scanlon of North Attleborough, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 696) of Adam J. Scanlon for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the presence of students’ phones in schools and classrooms and their effect on educational outcomes and student mental health. Education.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing a commission regarding phones in schools.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. There shall be a commission to study and make recommendations to the  
2 Joint Committee on Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
3 regarding the presence of students’ phones in schools and classrooms and their effect on  
4 educational outcomes and student mental health.

5 SECTION 2. The commission shall consist of 2 members appointed by the senate  
6 president, 1 of whom shall be the senate chair of the joint committee on education, and 1 of  
7 whom shall serve as co-chair of the commission; 2 members appointed by the speaker of the  
8 house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the house chair of the joint committee on education,  
9 and 1 of whom shall serve as co-chair of the commission; 1 member appointed by the minority  
10 leader of the senate; 1 member appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives;  
11 the secretary of education or a designee; the commissioner of elementary and secondary  
12 education or a designee; 2 members appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be an expert on

13 developmental psychology and mental health, and 1 of whom shall be an expert on education and  
14 the science of learning; and 1 person appointed from each of the following organizations: the  
15 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Inc.; the Massachusetts Association of  
16 School Committees, Inc.; the Massachusetts Teachers Association; the American Federation of  
17 Teachers, Massachusetts; the Massachusetts PTA; the Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children’s  
18 Hospital.

19 SECTION 3. The commission shall investigate the effects of the presence of students’  
20 phones in schools, including their effects on student learning and student mental health and  
21 development, and a review of current policies across districts and schools in the Commonwealth,  
22 and make recommendations regarding policies for schools, school districts, and the Department  
23 of Elementary and Secondary Education. These recommendations shall include:

24 (i) whether students should be prohibited from using their phones from the start of the  
25 school day to the end of the school day, or whether this prohibition shall exclude any particular  
26 periods such as lunch or recess;

27 (ii) whether school policy shall be that students may keep their phones in their bags or  
28 whether they must be kept in a locker or some other place during the school day;

29 (iii) whether such policies should be promulgated at the state level and binding on school  
30 districts, or whether such policies should be promulgated at the state level with incentives to  
31 local and regional districts to adopt them, or whether such policies should be promulgated at the  
32 state level as model policies, or whether such policies should be promulgated at the district level;

33 (iv) whether any other technology or tools should be used in the course of implementing  
34 a policy regarding phones in schools;

35 (v) whether the Commonwealth or individual districts should pursue any public or private  
36 funding to finance any such policies.

37 SECTION 4. The commission shall report to the joint committee on education and to the  
38 department of elementary and secondary education its findings and recommendations on or  
39 before January 1, 2026.