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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland Senate
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
For the Hearing on
Task Force to Study the Impact of Student Cell Phone Use in the Classroom
(SB 103)
January 17, 2018**

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA represents thousands of volunteer members and families in 900 public schools. For nearly 103 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 103, Task Force to Study the Impact of Student Cell Phone Use in the Classroom. This task force is charged with studying:

- 1) The impact of student cell phone use in the classroom on student learning;
- 2) The impact of student cell phone use in the classroom on teacher instruction;
- 3) Whether there are any benefits associated with student cell phone use in the classroom; and
- 4) Any other relevant matters relating to student cell phone use in the classroom.

Maryland PTA appreciates being named as a member of this task force given that one of the purposes of this advocacy organization is to promote safety for children and youth by working to set a standard for their care and protection. Maryland PTA realizes that technological advances have an impact on the welfare of children and their families. Technical advances such as the cell phone has offered educators multiple ways to engage students, to provide alternative audio or visual access and to create unique opportunities for role playing and research as well as to consult with authorities for emergency scenarios within classrooms and schools, including bullying alerts. Simultaneously, cell phone use in the classroom setting has been used to function as a negative instrument to record and promote inappropriate pictures and behaviors and has resulted in distractions in class that has interrupted teacher instruction and increased behavioral discipline reports.

The local boards of education have cell phone use policies that is part of a broader technology component in education concerning technical devices or wiring, or lack thereof, that may emit radiation. Outside of the current physical health concerns also lies the potential impact cell phone use has on attention span and reliance on quick access to information opposed to traditional research. However, there is a lack of information regarding the full extent to which cell phones have an impact on student learning, teacher instruction, student health, security and privacy, in addition to cell phone use on their academic and developmental achievement. Given the provisions of Every Student Succeeds Act to establish state-designed accountability systems that allow for multiple measures of student achievement, time is well overdue to study the impact of cell phone use in Maryland Public Schools.

It is for these reasons above that Maryland PTA encourages your vote to SUPPORT Senate Bill 103.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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