



August 8, 2024

Senator Henry Stern  
1021 O Street, Suite 7710  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT — SENATE BILL 1283 (AMENDED AUGUST 5<sup>TH</sup>) – OPPOSE**

On behalf of the California Policy Center, I write in opposition to SB 1283. Current law already allows school districts to limit or prohibit the use of cellphones on campus. As such, this “I-Know-What-You-Did-Last-Summer” bill is both unnecessary and chilling.

The latest amended version of the bill looks to be an extension of AB 1955 (Ward, Chapter 95, Statutes of 2024) which is unconstitutional and currently being challenged in court. More than exacerbating bad policy, SB 1283 is essentially state sanctioned spying. School districts should not be asking parents for permission to snoop on their children’s cellphones – which may be the property of the parents – especially with the intent to hide concerning information found on those devices from said parents because the school thinks those parents are not equipped to deal with revealed information after the parents gave permission to snoop in the first place.

By implication, this bill acknowledges that the search parameters it’s authorizing are highly likely to reveal other sordid and compromising information about the children, no matter how well-intended or careful a school official may be scrolling through kids’ cellphones. The examples of potential misuse of this policy change are unending and the bill’s vibes are more Stasi than Orwellian.

For example, what if a student’s cellphone had images, video or texts showing an inappropriate relationship with a teacher that didn’t rise to the standard of mandatory reporting? Could a teacher or administrator help that student find ways to bypass any parental monitoring mechanisms of social media platforms on these devices? Does this policy also incentivize teachers or administrators to use kompromat found on the phone as leverage against these students?

This bill should concern every parent who doesn’t want the state and schools spying on their family. For these reasons – and more – we oppose SB 1283.

Sincerely,

Lance Christensen  
Vice President of Education Policy & Government Affairs