

I am writing to address the issue of prison calling companies and the abuse they are heaping on prisoners and their families all over the United States. What's worse, is the states are taking a big cut of the charges we are paying in order to speak to our loved ones. I live in Bellingham, Washington and my husband is incarcerated at Mule Creek State Prison, in Lone, California. For me, it costs \$17.53 for a 15 minute call. There is no guarantee the call will last the entire 15 minutes AND there is no adjustment when the call is "accidentally" disconnected. I pay that rate regardless of how long I get to speak to my husband. Also, Global Tel Link will only allow me to have 12 calls a month! I don't understand ANY kind of logic behind that.

It is generally agreed by all state prison systems that keeping in touch with family members, is good for the emotional health of the prisoner AND for the family members too. Let me tell you, of all the people who are strapped for cash to pay for their living expenses, especially without the additional income of their husband or wife who is in prison...the LEAST able to afford exorbitant telephone calling rates are the family members of prisoners. This is tantamount to "kicking us while we're down". And this abuse is done with the states' blessing. Whoever came up with this kickback for the states is obviously out to punish the families and not just the prisoners.

In reality, the people who really suffer are the children who need to know their fathers or mothers, the wives who need to communicate with their husbands, the husbands who need to speak to their wives. We love our family members, regardless of the fact that they are in prison and we are paying exorbitant rates to speak with them. It's bad enough we have such limited access but to pay excessive amounts to these monopolistic companies...well, that's just not right. These companies are thriving on the disaster that hits a family when one of their members goes to jail. HOW is that, in any way, shape or form, acceptable. The truth of it is, it is not acceptable. It is criminal.

I understand the FCC is going to do something about the stranglehold that prison calling companies have on phone call rates

for only three private prisons. I'm not sure why these three private prisons have more or different justice than the rest of the prisons all over the United States. My understanding is that we are all equal under the law, and that it is illegal, not to mention unethical, to hold one affected prisoner/family member population group as more "deserving" of release from abusive telephone calling rates, over another.

Please look at the entire prison population and how we wives, mothers, sisters, grandmothers, children...all family members, suffer by paying these insane telephone charges in order to have a few precious moments with the people we love.

When I married my husband, I took a vow. That vow was to stick by him through good and bad.

This is the bad. I am doing my best to be there for him, to act as his advocate, to keep in touch, to make sure he knows he is loved as much as is humanly possible. Global Tel Link (and other companies like it) are taking advantage of this situation and charging whatever they darn well please...and states are supporting this behavior. Please do what you can do to correct this abuse. They may be prisoners, but they are humans. They need the contact of their loved ones and we, the people who are on the "outside" still have rights afforded to us by the laws of our country.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I'm asking you to please, do the right thing. Enjoin families in finding a way to receive phone calls from their loved ones without making us pay more than they can afford to pay. You have the power to change this situation so that everyone (prisoners too) can share the love they have for one another. That's all we really have on this earth. How can we, as humans, possibly put barriers in the way of loving one another. Life is hard enough as it is.

Sincerely,

Renee Sherrer- Daly

