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NOV 16 2012

FCC Mail Room

November 8, 2012

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Public Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 (“Wright Petition”)

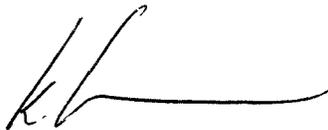
Dear Secretary Dortch:

I am writing to echo the comments submitted on this matter from Justice Fellowship:

Justice Fellowship believes that these unjust prison telephone policies must be eradicated. The FCC should uphold the Wright Petition by requiring companies to charge reasonable rates for prison calls that are comparable to rates outside of prison. Adopting such policy reforms will facilitate more communication between incarcerated offenders and their families, enabling them to draw from the encouragement and accountability that those relationships provide. Keeping these relationships a priority enhances offenders’ well-being and protects the well-being of their communities.

My son has gotten into some trouble a couple of times and talking to him on the phone from jail has been very costly and confusing. My experience with the third party carriers has been one of frustration, aggravation and prohibitive cost. We can do better.

Respectfully,



William Weckesser
618 Kensington Rd.
E. Lansing, MI 48823

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1275 So. Enterprise Road
Ponca City, OK 74604
November 9, 2012

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FCC Mail Room

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Public comment for CC Docket No. 96-128
In support of the "Wright Petition"

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I'd like to strongly encourage you to do whatever you can to cut the costs of telephone calls to/from inmates in jails and prisons around this nation. It seems that those who can least afford it, have to pay the highest rates! Families who want to keep in touch with their incarcerated loved ones pay a higher rate for jail telephone calls than ordinary citizens pay for overseas calls! Often, inmates are incarcerated so far from their families that face-to-face visits are major hardships for those left behind and phone calls are their only option to keep in touch.

Given that over 75% of prisoners are eventually released back into their communities, and given that it has been shown that the more contacts and communication that those prisoners can have with family and friends on the outside, the better their chances of succeeding as law-abiding citizens after their release (vs. recidivating back into the prison system again), it would seem that the government should do all that it can to encourage families to keep strong ties with their incarcerated loved ones. Currently, the phone situation is an obstacle to maintaining those ties.

I understand that the Bureau of Prisons' experience in charging minimal phone rates has been that they made a whopping \$34 million PROFIT in 2010 in spite of even those reasonable rates. That kind of profit made on the poor should be criminal!

The high price of prison phone calls are expected to be borne by those LEAST able to pay; minimum-wage families often left without their breadwinner struggle just to make ends meet, and high phone costs make that method of maintaining ties prohibitive.

Please support the Wright Petition to put a cap on prison telephone costs. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nancy LeFebvre

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Kayla Marnach
1022 Merlene Drive
Austin, Texas 78732

November 8, 2012

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Public Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 ("Wright Petition")

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I whole heartedly support the Wright Petition and beg that you will, too. When prisoners are sentenced, so are their families. Families have to do "time" just like the prisoner. Contact is so limited due to distance; phone calls become the lifeline that holds the families together.

I have two friends from two different cities who have sons in prison and on their limited budget they do all they can to provide funds for their sons. Both sons are without fathers. It's the mother's who bear the burden and the exorbitant phone rates are unconscionable.

Please bring justice to those outside the prison walls by mandating fair phone rates for all prisoners.

Respectfully,



Kayla Marnach,
Concerned citizen and friend

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Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Public Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 ("Wright Petition")

Dear Ms. Dortch:

It has been brought to my attention the excessive phone rates some prisoners' families have to pay to keep in touch with their loved ones who are incarcerated. I understand there are inconsistencies between States on this issue. I am writing to request your investigation into these issues and provide justice to the families of inmates.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration. I would appreciate hearing from you regarding this issue.

Sincerely,



Judy Roberts
712 S. Kennedy Ave.
Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57103

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Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

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FCC Mail Room

Re: Public Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 ("Wright Petition")

Jacqueline Pena
2932 Behrns Dr.
Melrose Park, IL 60164

Dear Ms. Dortch:

My husband has been incarcerated for the past 21 years. I have been accepting collect calls and now using Consolidated Communications for all these years. I must say that I have thousands and thousands of dollars trying to keep the communication lines open between my husband and our family. My husband at times has been hundreds of miles away from us. According to my understanding my calls are based on how far he is and the charges of accepting and talking. A typical interstate collect call from a prison has a \$3.95 connection fee (regardless of the length of the call), and, in addition, the rate per minute can be as high as almost *90 cents per minute*. **This can result in charges of between \$10 and \$17 for a 15-minute collect call.**

Not only do I accept his calls I have to drive long distance to see him, so now I have to include gasoline and motel or hotel stays that honestly I can't afford, but I need to see my husband and spend time with him. This is a very hard life and I know he did the crime, but do I also have to be punished financially? My calls with my husband are necessary. This is the way our family keeps in touch on a daily basis. Yes, he calls daily, we try to keep the family as united as possible, but sometimes it's impossible because of the extremely high phone rates.

We as the family on the outside bear these costs. I live paycheck to paycheck and barely am NOT making ends meet. I take from one bill to pay another and this has been going on for years. I don't have a choice to go to another company that has cheaper rates, I am stuck with one company called Consolidated Communications because that is the company that the Illinois Prison System has chosen and we are stuck with their decisions.

I can tell you that my calls with my husband help keep my family together. They are extremely important to us and we look forward to that phone call every day. I write this letter in hopes that you will help us with these rates. As a wife and mother, I am begging you to help us. Please help us families lower the cost of inmate calls.

Respectfully,



Jacqueline Pena, Wife of an Illinois Inmate

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MICHAEL R. DAVIS

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NOV 16 2012

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CELL #: 214.668.2771

FCC Mail Room

November 8, 2012

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Public Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 (“Wright Petition”)

Dear Secretary Dortch:

As someone who was just released from federal prison on October 17, 2012, I want to strongly encourage the FCC to uphold the Wright Petition by requiring companies to charge reasonable rates for prison calls that are comparable to rates outside of prison.

Over 1.6 million people are currently incarcerated in the United States, and approximately 700,000 will be released this year.¹ Research has shown that maintaining family relationships is a significant factor in the reduction of recidivism. For example, the Jane Addams Center for Social Policy and Research determined that “[family roles and relationships are important in reentry planning Family connections and other social networks impact not only families’ and children’s well-being, but also the achievement of social goals such as the reduction of crime and the building of vibrant communities.”² Additionally, the Urban Institute identified that released prisoners who had “closer family relationships, stronger family support, and fewer negative dynamics in relationships with intimate partners were more likely to have worked after release and were less likely to have used drugs. It is evident that family support, when it exists, is a strong asset that can be brought to the table in the reentry planning process.”³ These findings have long been recognized by corrections officials. In describing the purpose behind prisoner telephone access, the Federal Bureau of Prisons states, “Telephone privileges are a supplemental means of maintaining community and family ties that will contribute to an inmate’s personal development.”⁴ Consensus is clear that maintaining and building family relationships have a positive impact on recidivism—when released prisoners are in relationship with a supportive family, they are more likely to find a job, less likely to use drugs, and less likely to be involved in criminal activities.

Unfortunately, maintaining contact with family members by telephone is often extremely difficult for offenders due to the exorbitant rate of prison phone charges. State prisons often contract with a single phone company, allow that company to charge for services at rates far above the market price, and then receive substantial “commissions” from company revenues. Some states use a debit system for prisoners to buy phone minutes, but collect call systems are

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MICHAEL R. DAVIS

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch

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the norm. This means that many offenders' families must bear the financial burden of calls, which is often overwhelming for those who come from impoverished communities. Not only do these practices oppress poor families, they are also perverse public policy. The "commission" that State governments receive represents a regressive and highly selective tax that collectively punishes offender families.

I believe that these unjust prison telephone policies must be eradicated. The FCC should uphold the Wright Petition by requiring companies to charge reasonable rates for prison calls that are comparable to rates outside of prison. Adopting such policy reforms will facilitate more communication between incarcerated offenders and their families, enabling them to draw from the encouragement and accountability that those relationships provide. Keeping these relationships a priority enhances offenders' well-being and protects the well-being of their communities

Very truly yours,



Michael R. Davis

1

PAUL GUERINO, PAIGE M. HARRISON, AND WILLIAM J. SABOL, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST., OFF. OF JUST. PROGRAMS, BUREAU OF JUST. STAT., NCJ 236096, PRISONERS IN 2010 [at] 1, 5 (rev. Feb. 9, 2012), available at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/p10.pdf>.

2

Creasie Finney Hairston et al., *Children, Families, and the Criminal Justice System: Family Connections During Imprisonment and Prisoners' Community Reentry* 3 (Jane Addams Ctr. for Soc. Pol'y and Res., Research Brief, Winter 2004), available at http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research_public_service/files/familyconnections.pdf.

3

Christy Visher et al., *Baltimore Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home* 6 (Urban Institute March 2004), available at http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310946_BaltimorePrisoners.pdf.

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28 C.F.R. § 540.100(a) (2012).