

My fiance is Deaf and housed at MCIJ. Since the November before last, over a year ago, we have not been able to use TTY because it was switched to be a required collect call. The only call I accepted cost 20 dollars for nine minutes. A hearing inmate call make a call to my home through the pre-paid system for 85 cents for 30 minutes.

Another problem using the TTY through the Tnetix system is that there is static on the line and it almost completely garbles the message. It is not the same as if two hearing people have static on the line they can speak over the static. When there is static on the line the TTY adds and subtracts symbols and letters into the message. For example "I love you, can you read me" looks like "V* roveou, n tued me q". It was very frustrating to already struggle with trying to have a conversatation through the TTY on a static hindered line and then to be expected to pay twenty dollars per ten minutes is completely unfair and undue hardship.

If you add into the equation the fact that English is my fiance's second language and understand that he misspells and often uses the wrong word then he actually means, like "communities" for "communication". Also his grammar is in a different order than English, there are few articles, and the tenses are not correct. This is not because of his intelligence. This is because ASL is structurally different than English.

In order for us to have equal access to communication via phone, it would only be possible if he were provided access to a Video Phone and Video Relay Services.

Thank you so much for your willingness to address this issue for Deaf inmates and their families.