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Received & Inspected

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FCC Mail Room

February 25, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW; Rm TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Communications Commission WC Docket No. 12-357

Secretary Dortch:

This is a public comment for Communications Commission WC Docket No. 12-375. I believe regulations should be adopted and implemented to limit prison phone rates and prevent state governments from reaping kickback profits from them.

State governments should be barred from arbitrarily inflating prison phone rates by forcing communication companies to include exorbitant kickback fees (unauthorized taxes) in order to compete for prison phone contracts. For instance, the base rate charged for Michigan prison phone services (including the necessary security monitoring costs) is less than \$0.05 per minute. Michigan quadruples that rate, however, by demanding an additional \$0.15 per minute "Special Equipment Fund." Profits from that Special Equipment Fund are used to purchase Taser weapons and training for corrections and police officers. Michigan would not award its prison phone contract to a company unwilling to collect the Special Equipment Fund as part of its charged rate. Minus the state's kickback profiting, the cost on my interstate prison phone calls would be comparable to what the general public pays for the same service.

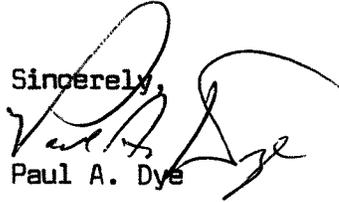
Michigan will not stop this unscrupulous practice of extorting prisoners and their families through a necessary communication service unless directed to do so by regulations from your agency. I respectfully request the adoption and implementation of Communication Commission regulations requiring prison phone rates to be the same as those charged the general public for the same service, with the addition of only actual necessary prison security costs. Other than actual necessary security costs, the regulations should specifically prohibit states from arbitrarily adding any type of special service fees simply because a call is made from a prison phone. If Michigan wants to assess a special tax for prison phone calls, it should be required to do so through authorized state tax assessment processes instead of arbitrarily forcing competitive bidders to add invented service fees to basic phone rates.

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A 15-minute interstate phone call on a Michigan prison phone cost more than I earn in one day at my prison job assignment. A Communication Commission interstate prison phone rate regulation preventing such state profiteering would reduce the cost of my interstate calls by seventy-five percent. I could then afford to communicate with my loved ones more than once a year. I strenuously urge you to adopt and implement appropriate regulations regarding prison phone rates. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Paul A. Dye

cc: file