

April 18, 2013

Dear Sirs:

This letter to express our strong opposition to the FCC 12-167 Federal Communications Commission: Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services. We believe that this legislation would seriously affect the ability of all Sheriff's Offices in Idaho, as well as nation wide to effectively manage our jails and correctional institutions.

As you are aware, Sheriff's are elected officials responsible to the public for crime control and prevention at the local level. Sheriff's must be able to operate our jails. Idaho Sheriff's process thousands of arrests and are responsible for detaining thousands of inmates on any given day.

Under the pending legislation, local jails would be required to provide inmates with a choice of carriers when placing telephone calls. This proposal would amount to nothing less than the complete destruction of the existing inmate phone service. Under the current inmate phone system, one service provider is contractually committed to monitor and control inmate calling, which prevents abuse and often assists criminal investigations.

The carrier of choice portion of the new legislation would cause the facility to lose control over monitoring and tracking inmate calling, which frequently results in criminal activity and massive fraud. Carrier of choice would disable the provider's ability to assist law enforcement officials with ongoing criminal investigations or to monitor the phone calls of suspected drug dealers, gang members and terrorists.

We very strongly oppose provisions in this legislation that would prohibit the payment of commissions by providers of inmate telephone service to the local government. These commissions are revenues that assist the local government in providing programs for the inmates. Without these commissions, many jails would be unable to fund inmate programs which directly benefit the inmates. We would have to go to our taxpayers of the county for these types of operational funds, or simply not provide them.

Inmate telephone calls are privilege not a right. Inmates are provided with other means of communication with their families and friends, such as, mail and visiting. We disagree that the telephone is the primary method by which inmates maintain contact with family members, but it is the most convenient for both the inmates and the families.

We endorse reasonable rates for inmate calls and require service providers to adhere to FCC rate guidelines. We however, remain strongly opposed to this legislation which would completely destroy the current system of inmate phone service and disable correctional facilities to provide a balanced system that encourages frequent inmate calling at fair rates, while allowing for effective control and protection from criminal abuse.