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Received & Inspected

MAR 25 2013

FCC Mail Room

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Complaints

March 17, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I have a 38 year-old son who is serving a 7-year sentence at a state prison in Georgia. The crime that he committed is the direct result of a mental illness, with which he was first diagnosed in 1994, and for which he was receiving inadequate treatment. In other words, it is the fault of no one – just his own rotten luck for getting stuck with this debilitating disorder.

The state of Georgia requires families of prison inmates to deal with a company called Global Tel Link if they wish to receive calls from their loved ones. These phone calls cost 89 cents a minute, plus a surcharge of approximately \$4.00 per call, plus taxes and fees. It amounts to a little over \$21 for a 15-minute call. I have spent over \$5,000 receiving collect calls from my son over the past 3+ years, usually one or two 15-minute calls per week.

This is an outrage. Why are these companies allowed to gouge families of prison inmates? I cannot afford these phone calls, but I have to accept them, because I love my son, and his emotional health, and his survival in prison, is important to me. With a lot of luck, and a lot of support from his family members, friends, and the community, he will be able to get out in a year or two and perhaps be able to construct a viable life for himself.

Families of prison (and jail) inmates are already hurting, because their loved one has gotten him/her self into a terrible jam. How is it OK to penalize them further by bankrupting them for wanting to maintain contact with their loved one who is behind bars?

I beg of you to investigate and address this terrible injustice.
Thank you for your urgent consideration of this matter.



Marilyn Ankrom
Bargain Land
1906 Washington Pike
Heidelberg, PA 15106

March 1, 2013

Received & Inspected
MAR 25 2013
FCC Mail Room

FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Office of the Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Criminal usury and
predatory rates being
charged to inmates
nationwide and their
family members and
loved ones

Dear Commissioner Clyburn,

I recently read a quote from you...

"Most inmates, along with their families and
friends, are low-income, so in-person visits
due to distance and expense are infrequent."

and nothing could be more truthful. I have a dear friend, Nino
Petrocelli, who is incarcerated at SCI-Forest, in Forest County, PA.
Because he has no real income he's incumbent on receiving money from
family, friends or anyone that wants him to call them so he can purchase
a pre-paid telephone calling card from his prison's commissary.

For him to call me in Heidelberg, (Allegheny County) PA it costs
him \$5.35 for 15 minutes if he uses a pre-paid calling card and if he
calls me collect I get charged even a couple of dollars more than that
to accept a 15 minute call. For him to call anyone outside of PA it
costs him \$9.60 for a 15 minute call if he uses a pre-paid calling card
or \$14.00+ to whomever he calls collect to accept the charges for a 15
minute out-of-state call.

The aforementioned rates are criminal usury and predatory rates.
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania receives a kickback from Global Tel
Link, the inmate telephone supplier, of 44.5% of every dollar which
comes to over 8 million dollars a year in telephone fee kickbacks from
GTL. No businesses in PA are allowed to charge 44.5% interest. Anyone
who would try to charge that kind of interest would be indicted for
Criminal Usury, be jailed, fined, and possibly serve time in jail or
prison if convicted. However, because this criminal act is being
perpetuated by the state our state Attorney General and State Auditor
General refuse to do anything about it. It is a form of Organized Crime
being perpetuated on the very poorest of the poor.

States award their inmate telephone contracts to the company that pays them the largest kickback which they try to euphemize by calling it a "surcharge fee". It's a nationwide R.I.C.O. when it's being perpetrated on innocent family members or loved ones of those incarcerated who are already facing severe hardships. You recently published a notice seeking input on this subject matter so I'm taking the time to write you in hopes that you'll spearhead new FCC regulations and put a stop to companies like Global Tel Link charging criminal usury predatory rates nationwide and kicking back criminal usury predatory rates to states for awarding GTL etal these lucrative contracts. New FCC regulations and tough oversight enforcement is the only thing that will stop GTL etal who operate this way with impunity. The following...

Prison Legal News
P.O. Box 2420
West Brattleboro, VT 05303
ph# 802-257-1342
E-mail: info@prisonlegalnews.org
Website: www.prisonlegalnews.org

conducted a very thorough nationwide report titled "Nationwide PLN Survey Examines Prison Phone Contracts and Kickbacks" by John E. Dannenberg. It was published in their April 2011 edition of Prison Legal News, Volume 22, No. 4, April 2011. You can request a copy of it by contacting them.

Let me inform you of the latest trick that GTL is now perpetuating on we citizens who receive collect telephone calls from inmates who are our loved ones. GTL started blocking inmates collect telephone calls to we family members and loved ones under the false excuse "GTL does not have a contract to collect fees from the carrier you're calling, therefore, the party you're calling will need to call GTL and set up a pre-paid calling account." Naturally this is a complete lie on GTL's part. I've been accepting collect telephone calls from inmate Nino Petrocelli for years and GTL has been collecting their fees from my carrier for all those years now all of a sudden GTL claims they don't have a contract to collect their fees from my same carrier. I called GTL and asked GTL for the name of a carrier they do contract with so I could get them to provide me telephone service and I could resume accepting Nino's collect telephone calls again? I was told a supervisor would call me back...but no one ever called back. GTL is forcing we family members and loved ones to buy blocks of prepaid calling time e.g., \$100, 00 at a time then charging us about \$120.00 for a \$100 block of prepaid phone time. They claim the additional monies are a processing or service fee. GTL is really taking severe advantage of we citizens! GTL is like the Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads!

Do you think there is anything you can please do to break up these monopolistic practices that allow inmate telephone providers like Global Tel Link etal to charge criminal usury predatory rates to inmates and family members and loved ones? If so can you please advise at your convenience? Anything you can please do to help will be very greatly appreciated. Thank you very much for caring enough to look into this matter. Hopefully you'll be successful in adopting new FCC regulations and putting a stop or cap on these predatory rates they're forcing on a captive audience that has no other choice.

Thank you very much for all your valuable time and any consideration afforded this request. God bless and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Ankrom
Bargain Land
1906 Washington Pike
Heidelberg, PA 15106

Ph# 412-276-3875

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2013 • B7

Jail's revenue from phone calls could fall

Westmoreland lockup netted \$270K from inmates last year

By **AMANDA DOLASINSKI**

Inmate phone calls generated about \$270,000 last year for the Westmoreland County jail, but the regulation of interstate phone call rates could slash that number.

In response to long-standing petitions asking for the regulation, the Federal Communications Commission recently published a notice seeking public input.

Interstate calls from the Westmoreland County jail cost 40 cents per minute plus a \$3.45 hook-up fee, according to the jail handbook. A 15-minute

phone call costs \$9.45 at that rate.

Inmates placed 71,658 phone calls from the jail last year, according to Warden John Walton.

The FCC reports interstate costs vary across the country — from \$2.05 at a prison in Montana to \$16.55 from a prison in Idaho for a 15-minute phone call.

The commission is reviewing a proposal to lower interstate rates, cap rates and end exclusivity agreements with telephone providers.

"The telephone is a crucial instrument for the incarcerated and those who care about them because voice calling is often the only communications option available," FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn said in a statement.

"Most inmates, along with their

families and friends, are low-income, so in-person visits due to distance and expense are infrequent," he said.

Inmates at the Westmoreland jail can receive up to three visits a week. They have access to unlimited phone calls, Walton said.

"If it's available to them, we encourage them to make phone calls," he said.

The impact of lower phone rates would result in less money for the two accounts the fees support, Walton said.

About half of the money generated is put into the general operating budget, and half into the inmate welfare fund, he said.

Amanda Dolasinski is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. She can be reached at 724-836-6220 or adolasinski@tribweb.com.

Received & Inspected

MAR 25 2013

FCC Mail Room

February 26, 2013

Federal Communication Commission
445 12 Street SW
Washington DC 20063

RE: Hearing on telephone call cost for incarcerated persons.

Dear FCC Members;

I am composing this short letter in protest of the absorbent cost that I face whenever I want to call a loved one who happens to be incarcerated. In the Kansas City Call weekly dated February 8 - February 14, 2013: "the FCC wants public comments to force the lowering of interstate and some local instate prison phone rates. It plans to cap the rates and put an end to the exclusivity agreements."

I am in agreement with the Kansas City Call when it states that, "It simply is not fair. It is extortion plain and simple". When a company has a monopoly on a service only because a government agency will not let other providers bid on certain contracts because of possible incentives to that particular government agency. The way that this system is set-up, family members and the incarcerated have no other choice because there are no other options. They are the only show in town; this also includes the Internet access that the incarcerated have access to as well.

I ask that the FCC Members look at this very disturbing situation and correct this type of shake down by the Federal Agency

Sincerely,



P.O. Box 5000

GREENVILLE, IL 62246