

Received & Inspected

FEB 12 2013

FCC Mail Room

FEBRUARY 5, 2013

CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
PUBLIC COMMENTS
445 12th STREET, SW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

RE: THIS IS A PUBLIC COMMENT FOR THE WRIGHT PETITION
(CC DOCKET #96-128).

DEAR SIR:

MY NAME IS STEVEN DARBY MCDONALD # 703852. I'M
A WASHINGTON STATE INMATE WHO IS CHARGED WITH DOOR-
MAT BURNING, AND I RECEIVED A MANDATORY LIFE SENTENCE
FOR THIS "CRIME" I DID NOT DO. ALL THE FACTS AND HISTORY OF
MY CASE, INCLUDING LARGE COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWING THE
MOTEL ROOM DOOR WAS NEVER IN FIRE, ARE AT WWW.STEVEN
DARBYMCDONALD.COM.

I've BEEN TRYING TO GET SOMEONE TO LOOK INTO THE
FACTS OF MY CASE, BUT I CANNOT DO IT BECAUSE I CANNOT
AFFORD WASHINGTON STATES PRISON PHONE RATES. I HAVE TO PAY
OVER \$3.65 CENTS FOR A 20 MINUTE CALL. PEOPLE ON THE STREET
CAN MAKE A CONTINUOUS CALL STRAIGHT FOR 24-7 FOR 4 DAYS AND
IT DOESNT COST THEM \$3.65 CENTS. YET I ONLY GET 20 MINS

CAN YOU PLEASE TRY TO CHANGE THIS OUTRAGEOUS OVER COST FOR
ME TO USE THE PHONE. PEOPLE IN PRISON DONT HAVE MONEY.
THATS WHY THEY ARE IN PRISON FOR THE MOST PART.

WE NEED YOUR HELP SIR, IN REVERSING THIS ABUSE

SO WE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES
AND IN MY CASE, TRY TO FIND SOMEONE WHO COULD HELP
ME SHOW MY INNOCENCE.

PLEASE LOOK INTO THIS OVER CHARGING OF PEOPLE WHO
HAVE REALLY NOTHING ALREADY, AND GET THE WA/DOC TO LOWER
THEIR RATES ON PHONE SERVICE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION.

Sincerely -

Steve McDonald

STEVEN Daryl McDONALD # 703852 / IMU F-206
CLALLAM BAY Correctional Center -
1830 Eagle Crest Way
CLALLAM BAY, WA 98327-9724

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2-5-13

FCC Mail Room

To whom it may concern, I'm
writing concerning outrageous ^{collect calling} sales
that my family members have been
being charged with over the years.

my name is

Lakesha Collins
#R78781 5A 46

You can mail all the paperwork
to:

Derrick Fleming
1376 W 79th

Chicago, IL 60620

Thank You for your
time and consideration...

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
PRISONER STATIONARY

CSJ-110 4/90
4835-3110

TO:

NAME Federal Comm. Commissioner		
NO. AND STREET OR R.R. 445 12 th St. SW		
CITY Washington	STATE DC	ZIP 20554

FROM:

NAME Eddie Dean Atkins	
NO. 140632	LOCK 2-151
INSTITUTION IBC	DATE 2-7-13

IN CORRESPONDENCE, USE NAME AND NUMBER ON YOUR LETTER AND ENVELOPE

Re: update

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FCC Mail Room

Dear FCC,

This is my second letter asking you to stop the embargoing done by the MDOC via exorbitantly high phone rates.

The MDOC cannot levy taxes on phone calls. please note the underlined reasons for phone rate increases.

The MDOC has hired 1,056 New Staff members: bought all Turnkeys New uniforms, and hired an additional 150 psychological service personnel, Nurses and support staff. what financial hardships?

please interdict to stop this phone rate increase? The MDOC has already levied another 6% increase on store prices, on top of the already 100% sales taxes - in conclusion, a State legislator or MDOC director cannot levy "Federal" taxes on state operated services.

Without your help, we prisoners will be robbed by bigger criminals than us. The needs of the State must never be bigger than the needs of the people.

Please stop this injustice

Prisoner Atkins

Prison phone disconnect

Jump in rates will further isolate Michigan prisoners and hit poor families hardest

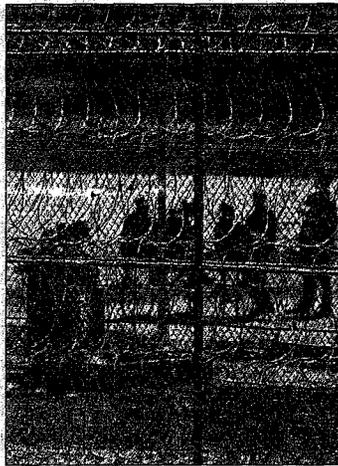


JEFF GERRITT

The Michigan Department of Corrections is trying to lighten its budget problems by putting them on the backs of prisoners and their families. By nearly doubling prisoner phone rates, the department will collect an estimated \$8 million a year for a special equipment fund. Another \$3 million will go to the phone company as an administrative fee for collecting the money. Talk about easy money.

A five-year contract with Public Communications Services, effective July 1, increased phone rates for Michigan prisoners from 10 cents to 18 cents a minute for prepaid debit calls, and from 12 cents to 20 cents a minute for collect calls. Bottom line: The contract collects about 14 cents a minute per call — adding up to \$11 million a year — for a special equipment fund that has nothing to do with the cost of providing telephone service.

Without special equipment charges, base telephone rates would drop to about 4 cents a minute — which is what inmates should pay. The special equipment fund was set



File photo by Paul Sancya/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prisoners at Ryan Correctional Facility in Detroit. Beginning July 1, phone rates for Michigan prisoners increased from 10 cents to 18 cents a minute for prepaid debit calls, and from 12 cents to 20 cents a minute for collect calls.

up to pay for telephone-related security equipment, such as phone monitoring and cell phone detection. Now, however, prison officials say the department can tap the special equipment fund for practically any security-related expense — a move that would possibly violate state law, or at least legislative intent.

The contract is a sweet deal for the phone company — and the department — but not for Michigan's nearly 44,000 inmates, who rely on phone calls to stay connected to spouses, children, other family members and friends. Organizers canceled a planned week-long phone boycott, but prisoners and their families are still steamed about the rates.

"They're killing us," said Darryl Woods, 39, an inmate at Ryan Correctional Facility in Detroit. Woods told me this week that higher rates have cut phone calls among fellow prisoners in half.

With fewer visiting days, high gas prices and the remote location of many prisons, phone calls are especially important for keeping families together.

Corrections is collecting data on prisoner phone use before and after the rates went up. Last year, Michigan prisoners made 13 million phone calls — nearly 300 per inmate.

Inmates typically earn less than \$1 a day at prison jobs. Most of the money for phone calls comes from families, either directly when inmates call collect or indirectly through prepaid debit calls. Prisoners in Michigan's 32 prisons can't get incoming calls; outgoing calls are monitored. Calls cannot exceed 15 minutes.

Even with the recent hike, Michi-

**EXCESSIVE PHONE FEES
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THE DEPARTMENT.**

gan's prisoner phone rates are lower than those in surrounding states, said Russ Marlan, administrator of MDOC's executive bureau. "We understand any increase will be unpopular, but we think these new rates are fair and appropriate," he told me this week. "It's appropriate that they (inmates) pay for some equipment that will keep them and our staff safe."

It's unclear how big a problem cell phones pose for prison officials, though a bill pending in the Legislature would make possessing unauthorized cell phones in prison a felony. At least 20 contraband cell phones were found in Michigan prisons last year, Marlan said.

Corrections is considering using the special equipment fund to pur-

chase a variety of security-related equipment, including radios, security cameras and personal protection devices. Still, using the fund to plug holes in the prison budget is not what legislators had in mind.

Since 2008, Corrections appropriations bills have included boilerplate that requires the department to keep prisoner phone rates comparable to those on the outside. It also provides for special equipment costs, but legislators like Rep. Joe Haveman, R-Holland, intended those for cell phone detection or other phone-related security equipment.

"I have some concerns about it," said Haveman, chairman of the subcommittee on corrections appropriations. "... There's a benefit to prisoners having access to their families."

Haveman told me this week he would monitor how Corrections spends the money.

Excessive phone fees not only unfairly burden low-income families but also undermine the re-entry and rehabilitation efforts trumpeted by the department. Taxpayers should not have to subsidize prisoner phone calls, but neither should the state make millions of dollars on the backs of some of the state's poorest people.

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