

FCC CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Further Recommendation Regarding Inmate Calling Rates

WHEREAS on September 21, 2012, the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) first adopted a resolution urging the FCC to ensure the price of calls from inmates are just and reasonable and;

WHEREAS on December 28th, 2012 the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for WC Docket No. 12-375, "Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services, and;

WHEREAS the FCC received thousands of comments from the public calling for reasonable rates for families of the incarcerated, including equal telecommunications access for those who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing, and a letter from Verizon Wireless urging the agency to examine the issues and take action, and;

WHEREAS on July 10, 2013 the FCC hosted a public Workshop on Reforming Inmate Calling Services Rates to gather public comments and testimony;

WHEREAS the public, including the original petitioners known as the Wright Petition, are still awaiting an order on this issue, first brought to the Commission in 2003, and;

WHEREAS the FCC will consider a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to reform interstate inmate calling services rates and practices during the August Open Meeting;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the FCC Consumer Advisory Committee re-states its request for Federal Communications Commission to move quickly and bring resolution to this long overdue issue and:

1. Ensure that the price of calls from inmates are reasonable
2. Require inmate calling service (ICS) providers to proportionally discount rates for TTY and relay calls since they take longer than voice conversations
3. Abolish or restrict "commissions" paid by telephone companies to correctional institutions to a reasonable amount above the actual cost of providing the service
4. Encourage the use of prepaid debit accounts for inmates whereby inmates or their called parties may buy low-cost minutes, and
5. Encourage prisons to proportionally grant more calling time for calls using TTYs or relay services
6. Continue to allow collect calls from inmates with charges that are a reasonable amount above the actual cost of providing the call, and

7. Require inmate calling service (ICS) providers to report all ICS-related complaints to the FCC, including disability access complaints.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that as the only agency with jurisdiction over all call rates, the Federal Communications Commission is the correct venue to resolve this problem.

[action, August 2, 2013]

Respectfully submitted:
Debra R. Berlyn, Chairperson
FCC Consumer Advisory Committee