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SEP - 9 2013

08/21/13

FCC Mail Room

Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
Public Comments  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Julius Genachowski,

MY name is BURRELL CLARK #732278. I am writing you in concern to the high cost of the prison PHONE CALLS. This is a public comment for the wright petition (cc Docket #96-128) The most convenient and cheapest way for inmates to stay in contact with their FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND LOVED ONES IS THROUGH PHONE CALLS. Last year phone rates were \$1.50 per call, and this year the phone rates has jumped to nearly double! This issue is a problem and concern since the state DOES'NT PAY INMATES ENOUGH MONEY TO PURCHASE FOOD, HYGIENE, SHOSES, CLOTHES, ETC. For instance, the average monthly salary for a porter, JANITORIAL WORK, CUSTODIAL MAINTENANCE AND CLEAN UP JOBS ROUGHLY ONLY PAY \$25.00, WHERE AS THE PRICE TO MAKE A PHONE CALL IS AROUND \$3.00. THIS IS 12% OF THE MONEY THAT WE EARN ON A MONTHLY BASIS. It is very CRUCIAL that we are able to CALL OUR CHILDREN WIVES, AND FAMILIES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK. This will lessen the worry and stress that we go through during our INCARCERATION PERIOD. Even most correctional officers agree with us on this point because it makes their job easier. I would be grateful if you could make the phone call rates cheaper. this would also help with the morale of prisoner's. Thank you very kindly in advance, for your time and anticipated cooperation in this matter.

Ian McNair  
ID# JC-6953  
1000 Follies Road  
Dallas, PA 18612-0286

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FCC Mail Room

August 24, 2013

Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Genachowski:

Recently there was a press release indicating that on Friday, August 9, the FCC voted to cap rates for prison interstate telephone calls.

I am including a copy of the article which reported this decision.

I am respectfully requesting a copy of the FCC's 2-1 decision.

Additionally, the article indicated that affected parties could file a claim for reimbursement of excessive costs for the interstate calls. I am requesting any available information (such as a claim form) indicating how one may initiate the process for recoupment of excessive fees/costs, etc.

Much thanks for your office's attention to my inquiry.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Claimant, SCI-Dallas

attachment/

# Agency Caps Inmates' Phone Rates

By JOE PALAZZOLO

The Federal Communications Commission voted Friday to cap rates for prisoners' telephone calls, ending an era in which inmates were charged as much as 89 cents a minute on top of setup fees that ran as high as \$3.95 a call.

The commission's 2-1 vote caps interstate charges for pre-paid calls at 21 cents per minute and collect calls at 25 cents per minute. Those are still high at a time when unlimited long distance offerings are commonplace, but prisoners can file challenges and seek refunds for rates exceeding 12 cents per minute and 14 cents per minute for regular and collect calls, according to the FCC.

The move is the culmination of a process that began more than a decade ago when Martha Wright, a Washington, D.C., grandmother, filed a petition with the agency because she wanted to speak with her grandson, who was serving a murder sentence outside the district, without incurring \$18 in charges for a five-minute phone call.

Telecommunications companies and law-enforcement groups had argued the higher rates were reasonable in light of the costs of oversight, security and technology required to monitor calls and analyze recordings.

But the FCC majority said the rates reflected agreements in which states looked for the biggest commission rather than the best deal for consumers, and that the burden was largely borne by inmates' families.

"Their wait is finally over," said acting FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, invoking the words of singer Sam Cooke. "It's been a long, long time coming, but change has finally come."

Prisoners' rights groups say the high rates stemmed from so-called site commissions—payments that phone-service providers agree to pay to the states in order to win business from



Bethany Fraser, a family member affected by the high telephone rates charged to prison inmates, listens to Friday's Federal Communications Commission hearing in Washington.

prisons. Prisoners have argued unsuccessfully in federal court that exclusive arrangements between prisons and service providers restrict their phone choices and drive up rates, chilling their speech in violation of the First Amendment.

Last year, the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the First Amendment claims of an Arkansas prisoner who said a 10-minute interstate call cost him \$10.43, plus taxes and other charges.

The Eighth Circuit case highlighted a contract between the Arkansas Department of Corrections and Global Tel\*Link, in which the company turned over 45% of its gross revenue to the prison system.

According to a study by Prison Legal News, a prisoner-advocacy group, states receive on average 45% of revenue from prisoners' calls.

The FCC decision also barred service providers from adjusting their interstate rates to account for such commissions, and from charging higher rates for those who use telecommunications relay services because of hearing or speech disabilities.

A spokesman for Global Tel\*Link, which according to its website, provides service to about 50% of inmates nationwide, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The company is owned by New York-based private-equity firm American Securities LLC, which didn't respond to a request for comment.

CenturyLink Inc., another major service provider, declined to comment. Another provider, Securus Technologies Inc., didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Inmate calling services are typically limited to collect or

debit-based calling from pay phones. The new regulations apply only to interstate communications, but the commission has asked for public comment on revising rates for intrastate calls. Some service providers in meetings with FCC staff said their business could become unsustainable if the FCC lowered interstate rates without addressing rate caps set by the states for calls within their borders.

Commissioner Ajit Pai, who dissented from the ruling, said he supported regulation of inmate calling rates but questioned whether the FCC had the resources to sort legitimate costs from others.

"To put it simply, I'm concerned the order will prove very difficult to administer and have unintended consequences," he said.

—Ashby Jones  
contributed to this article.

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Haynesville VA 22472

30 August 2013

Federal Communications Commission  
Telephone Division  
445 12 Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Re: Interstate Prison Inmate Telephone Rates

Dear Sir or Ms:

I read with interest a Washington Post article earlier this month concerning new limits on the rates telephone companies may charge prison inmates for interstate calls. The article said the ruling was effective immediately. I understand that newspaper information is not always accurate.

Our Telephone service is provided by Global Tel Link. To take advantage of these rates, on August 29, 2013 I made a prepaid call from my debit account from here in Virginia to a friend about thirty miles away, across the Potomac in southern Maryland.

The rate that was announced by the GTL computer voice was a surcharge of \$2.7706 plus \$.4618 for the first minute plus \$.4618 for each additional minute plus a federal tax of 15.1%. For a fifteen minute call this totals \$11.17. The newspaper article indicated the prepaid rate should be no greater than \$.21 per minute and that a fifteen minute call should be less than \$4.00.

Please inform me if I have correctly interpreted the article, and if the article correctly represented your rulings. If the rates above are in violation, please let me know what action I should take.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Julian Kenneth Armel Jr