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Public Comments on Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services:=====

Title: Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services

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Comment: I think adopting distance insensitive ICS rates is a good idea. Having distance sensitive rates seems, in a word, heartless. Inmates cannot help that they are imprisoned in a facility that may cause their calls to family members, friends, or counsel be long-distance, and, as a result, more expensive than a local call. I believe adopting a flat rate, such as the \$0.07 one proposed, would be of a benefit to both inmates and phone service providers. The inmates would be making a higher volume of calls and have confidence in the concrete rate. The service providers, I believe, would enjoy a steady stream of calls being made, because inmates wouldn't have to make calls sporadically when they absolutely needed to because of worry about the different rates.

I'm not sure that limiting the maximum amount a service provider can collect per call to \$8.00 is a good idea, though. Correctional facilities have a fixed amount of phones and there are a fixed

number of hours in the day during which inmates can make calls. As such, the service provider and correctional facilities wouldn't have any incentive to ensure the inmate gets a good quality of call. What's stopping the service provider from ensuring the call cuts out once the inmate has reached the \$8 mark so that another inmate can make a call and earn the service provider another \$8? I think the \$8 cap could potentially end up encouraging nefarious behavior on the part of the service provider.

While I understand a desire to differentiate between "jails" and "prisons," I don't think it's necessary to differentiate between them for a tiered rate structure. While inmates in jails and prisons probably have different needs for their phone calls and the nature and substance of their calls are different, I don't see how it's advantageous to charge inmates different rates based on their being in a prison or a jail. Calls to an attorney from an inmate in jail may be equally as long as calls to a spouse made by an inmate in a prison who has lost his/her last appeal. I think the underlying reason for the desire of a tiered rate system is based on these assumptions about phone calls concerning different subjects lasting for various amounts of time, and that different facilities have certain types (and lengths) of calls made by them more often.

Overall, I think too many aspects of prisons are shortchanged because citizens find it hard to sympathize with criminals. But it is our duty as a society to provide for prisoners that we incarcerate and I also think prisons have drifted far away from any rehabilitative/correctional quality they should have on prisoners. Prisoners should be able to be confident in the rates their calls will cost.

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