



November 5, 2012

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street. S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Joint Ex-Parte Comment for CC Docket No. 96-128 (“Wright Petition”)

Dear Secretary Dortch:

We, the undersigned, are contacting you in reference to CC Docket No. 96-128 (known as the “Wright Petition”). On behalf of the communities we represent, we urge the FCC to take action to address the cost of interstate phone rates, which falls squarely within the FCC’s jurisdiction.

The cost of prison phone calls—which can only be called exorbitant—are the direct result of a monopoly system that undermines the communication between incarcerated individuals and their family. As data shows, over half of prisoners with children are held more than 100 miles away from where they lived previously, and 10 percent are held over 500 miles away.¹ As a result, traveling for in-person visits is time consuming and expensive—and thus unaffordable for many. Given this, access to low-cost phone service options should be part of the connectivity equation. However, a typical 15-minute call can cost more than \$17 in our correctional phone services market which is dominated by Global Tel*Link (50 percent), and Securus (30 percent).²

We believe connecting incarcerated individuals with their families and loved ones should be a national priority! The health and wellbeing of our communities should not be sacrificed for a telecommunications service that exploits our need for family connectivity. We are not alone—research and public opinion are on our side. Childhood development experts say that regular contact between family members and their incarcerated loved ones is essential for everyone’s health and wellbeing.³ Further, studies show that regular communication between inmates and their support system can also help reduce the likelihood of a

¹ <http://www.urban.org/publications/310882.html>

² <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-10-04/prison-phones-prove-captive-market-for-private-equity>

³ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/clarissa-ramon/truth-about-prison-phones_b_1856657.html



return to prison. Additionally, a recent poll found that 81 percent of African-Americans and 70 percent of Latinos believe it is unacceptable for calls from prison to be higher than those outside of prison.⁴

As the only agency with jurisdiction over long distance rates, the undersigned believe the Federal Communications Commission is the correct venue to resolve this problem. We urge the FCC to follow its mandate and ensure “reasonable rates” for consumers in the telecommunications market, and protect our communities from this abusive practice by capping interstate prison phone call rates.

Sincerely,

amalia deloney
Associate Director

Supporting Organizations:

ACORN8
Alabama State Association of Cooperatives
Art is Change
AYPAL
Causa Justa:: Just Cause
Center for Popular Economics
Center for Rural Strategies
Center for Third World Organizing
Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Chicago Media Action
Coalition for Democratic Pacifica
Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails
Common Frequency
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Community Media Services
Community Media Workshop
Community Technology Network
Consumers Union
Deep Dish TV
East Bay Saturday Dialogues
East Bay Social Forum

⁴ <http://www.mediafire.com/?eu30asfsttb0tb9>



Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Enlace
Esperanza Peace & Justice Center
eTc Campaign
Families Rally for Emancipation and Empowerment
Free Press
Fuerza Mundial Communications
Generation Justice
Global Action Project
Gordon Bernell Charter School
Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training
Greene County Democrat
H.O.M.E.Y
Harris County Green Party
Highlander Research and Education Center
Hispanic Organizations Leadership Alliance
Immigrant Rights Clinic, Washington Square Legal Services
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Instituto de Educacion Popular Del Sur de California
kpfa
La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles
Latino/a Social Work Coalition
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Line Break Media
Main Street Project
Making Contact /National Radio Project
Martinez Street Women's Center
Media Action Center
Media Alliance
Media Literacy Project
Media Mobilizing Project
Metropolitan Detention Center, ABQ, NM
MI-CURE
Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing
Mujeres Unidas y Activas
My Community NM
National Hispanic Media Coalition
New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute



New Sanctuary Coalition
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
OneLife Institute
Open Access Connections
Organization for Black Struggle
Organizing Apprenticeship Project
People's Health Movement
Prison Creative Arts Project
Progressive States Network
Prometheus Radio Project
Public Knowledge
Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project
Quote...Unquote, Inc.
REV/People's Production House
Rural Coalition
San Francisco Bay View Newspaper
smartmeme
SouthWest Organizing Project
Southwest Workers Union
Storycatchers Theatre
Strong Families
The Advocates for Human Rights
The LAMP
The Maysles Institute
The Peoples Channel & Durham Community Media
The Praxis Project
The Utility Reform Network
Trans Youth Support Network
U of M Hospital
Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center
Vermont Workers' Center
Voice of Witness
W. Haywood Burns Institute
Waves of Change
William C. Velasquez Institute
Working Narratives
Young Women United