

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Sherry Vasquez and I live in Redmond, Oregon. My son is incarcerated at OSP which is about two and a half hours away. I am able to visit him once or twice per year. Corresponding by mail doesn't work well for me, as I have a hard time writing and spelling without help after going through chemo. We have therefore relied on phone calls to stay in touch.

Unfortunately, the cost of phone calls has severely limited the amount of time we are able to talk. I am on a fixed income and my family does not have a lot of money. We are able to contribute about \$25 per month to my son's phone account. But we are a large family — my son has nine siblings, two children, and a bunch of grandchildren — and he tries to spread that money out to stay in touch with everyone. What that means is we have resorted to hurrying through our weekly phone calls, quickly providing essential updates on how we are doing, and then ending the call after five or ten minutes. My son has been in prison for more than twelve years, so that is how he has heard about everything going on in our family over the years, including births of babies, weddings, and deaths of family members. I wish we could talk for longer each time, but we can't afford it.

Phone calls are a very important way for my son to stay connected to the family, and I know he feels down when he is not able to speak with us. If phone calls were free, it would be amazing. I would talk with him practically every day.

Sincerely,

Sherry Vasquez
Redmond, Oregon