

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Melissa Osorio and my son has been incarcerated at OSP for three years. I live about three hours away in Terrebonne, Oregon, so I am only able to visit once every couple months. We primarily use the phone to stay in touch. We talk on the phone a couple times per week, using the full thirty minutes each time.

It is hard to think about him being in prison, while we are out here, limited in our ability to be close with him. It is hard to not have the kind of communication we used to have. As his mother, I worry often about how he is doing. Our phone calls reassure me that he is doing okay, that he is not in a bad place mentally, and that things are alright in the prison. That reassurance greatly helps my mental health. For him, our phone calls connect him with the outside world and reassure him that he is still a part of our family. In some ways, it pains him to hear about all of our lives out here, but it also helps him.

I am able to put \$100 on my son's phone account every few months. It is a burden but it is not something we would ever want to go without. If we did not pay for his phone calls, my son would not be able to afford them himself. He barely makes enough money to pay for necessities. If phone calls were free, we would happily talk more often.

It's important to stay in touch with people who understand you, love you, and are there for you. Without being able to communicate with your loved one, it feels like a missing piece, a broken family. At least my son gets the chance to speak with us, but a lot of families cannot afford to stay in touch at all, and free phone calls would give them that crucial opportunity as well.

Sincerely,

Melissa Osorio
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