

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Mike Winter, and my brother has been incarcerated at OSP for the last seventeen years. I live in Albany, about 20 miles away, and I visit him once a month. We also stay in touch through the messaging app. However, throughout his time in prison, our main way of staying in touch has been through phone calls. We talk twice a week. I'm the only family member who visits him or stays in regular contact.

Over the phone, we like to share past memories about our parents, who are deceased, the activities we used to do as kids, and my brother's time in the Navy. Just this week I told him about a motorcycle I saw. It was the first motorcycle I ever owned back in the 70's. We reminisced about the rides we used to take up and down the driveway, with my little brother's hands gripping the crossbar. He shares how proud he is of his son, who was recently awarded a Silver Star. We talk about life after death. Our phone calls are very important to both of us. We always make each other laugh. For my brother, each laugh is a precious moment of reprieve. His demeanor always changes when we talk.

Thankfully, my brother is able to pay for our calls. It is difficult for me to do so because I am on a fixed income, disability social security, and it is already difficult to manage financially. Another expense would make things even harder. If my brother lost the ability to afford phone calls, we would both be devastated. Not being able to call would make it difficult to maintain our relationship. It would take away my brother's outlet and crush his spirit. No family should have to experience that kind of separation just because they don't have enough money. Please approve HB 3118 to make prison phone calls free.

Sincerely,

Mike Winter
Albany, OR
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