

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Jason Jones, and my close friend has been incarcerated at OSP for ten years. Living in Eugene, which is about an hour away, I've been able to visit him about once every two months. We have therefore used the phone to stay in touch for the majority of his incarceration. We usually talk weekly, if not a couple times per week, although recently his access to phones has been limited, so we've been talking every couple of weeks.

Our phone calls provide my friend a connection to the outside world. Especially in prison, when a person goes a long time without speaking with friends and family, it is easy for depression and negativity to sink in. My friend does a lot to keep himself busy and maintain positivity, but phone calls are an important part of that. From my end, if I don't hear from him for a while, I develop concerns and become anxious about his well being. Speaking with each other is always a relief for both of us.

The main focus of our conversations is our goals. It has been a blessing for us to witness each other's growth over the years. I have started a family and bought a home. He has become very involved with employment, education, and programming, and is now even creating and leading programs at OSP. It has been over the phone that he has excitedly shared news of each new accomplishment, educational degree, and professional license. I have also been especially glad to learn through these conversations about his discovery of faith. Our phone calls have allowed me to support him in his progress, as he frequently requests books and other educational resources from the outside, which I am always happy to send him.

Thankfully, phone call costs have not been too much of a burden for me. I put \$30 or \$40 on the account at a time and refill it as necessary. Sometimes, I also add money to his books so he can call other people. I know that if I didn't contribute, it would be difficult for my friend to stay in touch with his loved ones. He makes very little money, and his family members on the outside are also in very tough financial positions. I hate to think about all the people who do not have support and cannot afford to call each other.

If the purpose of incarceration is supposed to be rehabilitation, I don't see the benefit of monetizing communication with loved ones. Prisoners are already locked up and separated from their families. Many people on the outside are already quick to distance themselves when a person is incarcerated. I can't imagine how many people my friend lost touch with just due to that reason. Charging money for phone calls just adds an additional barrier. It adds a barrier not only to staying in touch, but to successful rehabilitation.

Sincerely,
Jason Jones
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