

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Lacey Detzel and I live about fifteen minutes outside of Salem. My mother was recently released after spending four years incarcerated at Coffee Creek. During her incarceration, I was able to visit her in person once or twice per month. Our main way of staying in touch was the phone. We talked on the phone every other day.

It was through phone calls and in-person visits that my mother and I were able to build a real relationship. Prior to her incarceration, she was not able to be present in my life or my kids' lives due to her struggles. Our first phone call started with an apology. She expressed regret for the choices she made and the ways those choices impacted and influenced me as I grew up. She expressed a desire to learn how to manage her addiction and become a positive part of my life and my kids' lives. We were able to build trust over the following months and years as she demonstrated her commitment to staying on the right path. After working towards her GED for a very long time, I remember when she called me to share that she had finally earned it. I was so proud of her that I cried. Later, she went on to become a drug and alcohol counselor.

Now, my mother is out of prison and doing absolutely fantastic. She now reflects on how much it meant to her when she would call me crying and I would help her process her feelings and regain the will to continue, or when she would speak on the phone with my children, her grandchildren, whom she always called the best part of her day. At the time, I was the only one of her children who was in contact with her. She has told me that without my presence in her life, she does not know if she would have been able to make it through her incarceration.

I was fortunate to be able to contribute \$100 each month to both my mother's account and my cousin's account. (My cousin is still incarcerated, and I stay in touch with him over the phone as well.) I sent that money to their general funds accounts as I wanted to give them the freedom to put it towards whatever they needed, whether that be phone calls or commissary.

However, many prisoners do not have someone on the outside who can support them financially. People in prison should not have to pay to stay in touch with family. Virtually everything has already been taken away from them. There is no reason to also take away their ability to contact family and receive support. And if they can receive that support, it could help them make the changes they need to, as it did for my mother. Rebuilding my relationship with my mother has been deeply meaningful for me, and I would hate for any family to be deprived of that opportunity. I strongly believe prison phone calls should be free.

Sincerely,  
Lacey Detzel  
(971) 458-3331