

Dear Oregon legislators,

My name is Austin Enoch and I have a friend who has been incarcerated at OSP since 2022. I live in Redmond, Oregon, which is about two and a half hours away. I have not been able to visit him in person. Though we have not been able to talk lately due to phone registration issues, we talked on the phone about once per month for the first year of his incarceration.

My friend was close with me and my son before he was incarcerated, and I want to remain close with him during this especially challenging time. I believe that remaining close with him will make it easier for me to eventually be a person who can support him after his release. Our phone calls allowed us to stay connected and familiar with what was going on in our lives. It was meaningful for me to hear about his growth. The last time we were able to talk, I remember congratulating him for starting work on college classes. Our calls were also something my friend looked forward to. They reminded him that he had people who cared about him and would be there to support him going forward.

I think it is very important for people to be able to stay in touch with friends and family as they go through the correctional process. Maintaining access to people who care about you, rather than feeling like some forgotten friend, is crucial for a person's overall morale. I believe that maintaining connection with friends and family is also one of the most important steps towards successful reintegration into the outside world after release. Those people are an AIC's support system. There are already so many obstacles for incarcerated people when it comes to maintaining relationships with people on the outside. I do not believe we should add the additional obstacle of monetary costs for a person to use the phone.

Sincerely,

Austin Enoch
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