

Dear Oregon legislators,

Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Ben Ogletree and I live in Huntington Beach, CA, 1,500 miles away from my brother who is incarcerated at the Oregon State Penitentiary. He has been there for the last 10 years. We talk on the phone for about an hour every weekday morning.

We talk about everything — life, family matters, self-improvement, God, business, politics. I had a daughter earlier in the year, and telling him about her allows him to experience that joy vicariously and feel more connected to the family. Talking has helped us maintain a solid relationship and has enhanced his mindset and helped keep his mentality positive. Our phone calls give him a resource to vent and verbally process the things he's dealing with. They are very therapeutic. We help each other work through things.

Keeping in contact definitely has its own set of burdens. These days, our phone calls routinely cost \$200 per month. I am thankfully in a place financially where this isn't too difficult. But earlier on, when I wasn't as financially stable, it made a much bigger impact. We often had to space out our calls to ensure we weren't overburdened financially. Otherwise, costs could reach \$300, \$400, or even \$500 per month. That happened several times. Even today, I often find myself weighing the cost-benefit analysis of putting another \$25 in the account to talk to him for a few more hours. But ultimately, it's the only real way to communicate with him and hear his voice.

It is important to be able to call loved ones, not at a massive expense. That ability would especially benefit other families who aren't as financially stable as I am now.

Sincerely,

Ben Ogletree  
Huntington Beach, CA