

Submitter: Olivia Bounvongxay
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3118

Legislatures - My younger brother was first incarcerated while I was in my early twenties finishing up my BA at a local college. When he was at the county prison awaiting trial, me, my sister, my mom, and my dad took turns visiting him every weekend for four years. It was our way of showing up for him. When he got sentenced, that's when he was transferred to different prisons, some as far out as Mississippi. I also moved from California to Oregon, and through all of our transitions, we were still able to maintain a healthy relationship through phone communications for almost the next decade. I am so grateful to be able to speak with him throughout those years, and it made his transition to the outside just a little bit easier. He had a foundation. Our family was lucky to have the means to each pay for our own phone time, the time to visit him every weekend awaiting trial, and the money to fly to where he was at the time to see him each year, sometimes every other year. My parents are immigrants and live very humbly. They were able to make it work, but I know so many families that could not. Please at least make the phone calls free. Not all those are as fortunate and have to make the tough decision between talking to their loved one, putting food on the table, debt, and other financial hardships. Don't force them to make that choice. It saved our relationship and made those very difficult times just a little bit easier. I support HB 3118.