

7. NAACP Supports Proposed Rule by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to Stop Exploitative, Predatory Phone Rates for Incarcerated People
Benjamin Todd Jealous, President and CEO

Concurred as amended

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic minorities, and specifically African Americans, are vastly over-represented among the prison population; and

WHEREAS, although African Americans are just under 14% of the overall population, we are over 40% of our nation's current prison population; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 9 African American children have an incarcerated parent today; and

WHEREAS, African Americans are also vastly over-represented in terms of Americans who live below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, telephone calls are a critical tool to protect civil rights—to improve the likelihood inmates have a chance to become productive members of society after incarceration, to enhance the safety of prison facilities, and to help ensure that the civil rights of people who are incarcerated are not abused; and

WHEREAS, studies have demonstrated and common sense dictates that maintaining a connection with loved ones, friends, and families while incarcerated is a key component in reducing recidivism; and

WHEREAS, sadly, some prisoners and their families have been charged exorbitant, predatory rates for phone service. Costing up to 24 times a normal call, these unscrupulous phone service providers have been known to charge more than \$3.00 per minute; and

WHEREAS, given the importance of phone calls to inmates and their families, friends, and loved ones, and the disproportionate impact that targeted, high cost phone service has on African Americans, the NAACP has worked independently and with other groups across the political spectrum and from the religious, civil rights and human rights communities for over 10 years advocating that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reduce and establish a cap on the cost of prison phone rates; and

WHEREAS, on December 28, 2012, the FCC announced a proposed rule to help the hundreds of thousands of prisoners and their families by reducing and capping the high phone rates.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NAACP strongly supports the efforts by the FCC to reduce and cap prison phone rates.