

EXHIBIT 5

Comment on video visitation

Securus ends its ban on in-person visits, shifts responsibility to sheriffs

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

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by [Bernadette Rabuy](#), May 6, 2015

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Easthampton, MA — On Monday, Securus, the video visitation industry leader, announced that it will no longer explicitly require county jails and state prisons to replace traditional family visits with video visits. Securus CEO Richard A. Smith stated that the billion-dollar phone and video visitation company “found that in ‘a handful’ of cases,” Securus was including a clause that “could be perceived as restricting onsite and/or person-to-person contact.”

But Securus’s new policy is much more significant than Securus’s announcement implies, says Bernadette Rabuy of the Prison Policy Initiative. “There is clear language banning in-person visits in 70% of the Securus contracts we examined for our report, Screening Out Family Time: The for-profit video visitation industry in prisons and jails.” The contracts plainly read: “For non-professional visitors, Customer will eliminate all face to face visitation through glass or otherwise at the Facility.”

This offensive clause was brilliantly challenged by comedians [Ted Alexandro](#) and [Ben Rosen](#), arguing about whether video visitation lives up to the industry’s claims that it’s “just like Skype.”

 1/4 Family time?



While many of Securus's competitors have worked with sheriffs to replace in-person visits with video visits, Securus was the only video visitation company that dictated correctional visitation policy in the contract. This clause has been controversial. After public protest, the Portland, Oregon Sheriff was the first to successfully amend an existing Securus video visitation contract, and in Dallas County, Texas county legislators were able to eliminate the clause before signing a contract with Securus.

Video visitation is a promising technology that could make it easier and more affordable for families to stay in touch despite the challenges of incarceration. But as it is too often implemented, going high-tech has been a step in the wrong direction.

“This announcement won’t necessarily bring back in-person visitation,” said the Prison Policy Initiative’s Bernadette Rabuy. “Traditionally, video visitation companies and sheriffs have played the blame game, neither has been willing to take responsibility for banning in-person visits. Now that Securus is shifting moral responsibility to the sheriffs, the Prison Policy Initiative will be working with concerned families across the country to ensure that sheriffs reverse these draconian policies.”

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