1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) WORKSHOP ON FURTHER REFORM OF INMATE CALLING SERVICES July 9, 2014 9:30 AM - 4:12 PM 445 12th Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20554

Reported by: Chaz Bennett

Capital Reporting Company

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1	APPEARANCES	
2	FCC REPRESENTATIVES:	
3	TOM WHEELER, Chairman	
4	MIGNON CLYBURN, Commissioner	
5	JESSICA ROSENWORCEL, Commissioner	
6	FCC MODERATORS:	
7	KALPAK GUDE, Chief, Pricing Policy Division,	
8	Wireline Competition Bureau	
9	RHONDA LIEN, Attorney, Pricing Policy Division,Wireline Competition Bureau	
10	DAVID ZESIGER, Senior Counsel, Pricing Policy	
11	Division, Wireline Competition Bureau	
12	LYNN ENGLEDOW, Assistant Chief, Pricing Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau	
13	CO-MODERATOR:	
14	DARRELL A. BAKER, Director, Utility Services,	
15	Alabama Public Service Commission	
16	PANELISTS:	
17	DARRELL A. BAKER, Director, Utility Services, Alabama Public Service Commission	
18	CHERYL A. LEANZA, Policy Advisor, United	
19	Church of Christ, OC Inc.	
20	TALILA A. LEWIS, Founder, Helping Education to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD)	
21	JESSE WIESE, Policy Analyst, Justice	
22	Fellowship	

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1	APPEARANCES (Cont'd)	
2	PANELISTS (Cont'd):	
3	KARINA WILKINSON, Steering Committee Member, New Jersey Advocates For Immigrant Detainees	
5	PAUL WRIGHT, Executive Director, Human Rights Defense Center	
6	ALEKS KAJSTURA, Legal Director, Prison Policy Initiative	
7	LEE G. PETRO, Of Counsel, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP	
9	WILLIAM L. POPE, President, NCIC	
10	VINCENT TOWNSEND, President, Pay-Tel Communications, Inc.	
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12	ELIAS A. DIGGINS, Division Chief, Denver Sheriff's Department on behalf of the American Jail Association	
13	ALEX FRIEDMANN, Managing Editor, Prison Legal News	
15	KEVIN LANDRY, Assistant Director, Office of Detention Policy and Planning, U.S.	
16	Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security	
17	RICHARD "RICK" A. SMITH, CEO, Securus	
18	Technologies, Inc.	
19	THOMAS SWEENEY, Senior Vice President-Sales, Global Tel*Link	
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21	BRYAN F. BYRNE, Founder and Managing Partner, meshIP, LLC	
22	JAY L. GAINSBORO, Founder, JLG Technologies, LLC	

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             APPEARANCES (Cont'd)
 2 PANELISTS (Cont'd):
        GRANT GONGAWARE, Chief Architect, Telmate,
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        LLC
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        CHRIS MOORE, Vice President-Product
        Management, Global Tel*Link
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1	A G E N D A	J
2	Welcome & Remarks	
	Remarks by Chairman Tom Wheeler,	
3	Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, and Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel	
4	Commissioner dessica Rosenworcei	
5	Panel 1: Impact of Reform and Potential Need for Additional Reform	
6	Co-Moderators:	
7	Mr. Kalpak Gude, Chief, Pricing	
8	Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau	
9	Ms. Rhonda Lien, Attorney, Pricing	
10	Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau	
11	Panelists:	
12	Mr. Darrell A. Baker, Director,	
13	Utility Services Division, Alabama Public Service Commission	
14	Ms. Cheryl A. Leanza, Policy	
15	Advisor, United Church of Christ, OC Inc.	
16	Ms. Talila A. Lewis, Founder,	
17	Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf (HEARD)	
18	Mr. Jesse Wiese, Policy Analyst, Justice Fellowship	
19		
20	Ms. Karina Wilkinson, Steering Committee Member, New Jersey	
21	Advocates for Immigrant Detainees	
	Mr. Paul Wright, Executive	
22	Director, Human Rights Defense Center	

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                   AGENDA (Cont'd)
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   Congressional Remarks
         Remarks by Congresswoman Eleanor
         Holmes Norton (D-DC)
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   Panel 2: Ancillary Charges
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         Co-Moderators:
 6
              Ms. Rhonda Lien, Attorney, Pricing
 7
              Policy Division, Wireline
              Competition Bureau
 8
              Mr. David Zesiger, Senior Counsel,
 9
              Pricing Policy Division, Wireline
              Competition Bureau
10
         Panelists:
11
              Mr. Darrell A. Baker, Director,
              Utility Services Division, Alabama
12
              Public Service Commission
13
              Ms. Aleks Kajstura, Legal
              Director, Prison Policy
14
              Initiative
15
              Mr. Lee G. Petro, Of Counsel,
              Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
16
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              Mr. William L. Pope, President,
              NCIC
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              Mr. Vincent Townsend, President,
19
              Pay Tel Communications, Inc.
20 Q/A Session
21 Lunch Break
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1	AGENDA (Cont'd)	/
2	Panel 3: Understanding the Provision of ICS in Different Facilities	
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4	Co-Moderators:	
_	Ms. Lynne Engledow, Assistant	
5	Chief, Pricing Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau	
6	Mr. Kalpak Gude, Chief, Pricing	
7	Policy Division, Wireline	
8	Competition Bureau	
	Mr. Darrell A. Baker, Director,	
9	Utility Services Division, Alabama Public Service Commission	
10	Panelists:	
11		
12	Mr. Elias A. Diggins, Division Chief, Denver Sheriff Department	
	on behalf of the American Jail	
13	Association	
14	Mr. Alex Friedmann, Managing Editor, Prison Legal News	
15		
16	Ms. Aleks Kajstura, Legal Director, Prison Policy	
	Initiative	
17	Mr. Kevin Landy, Assistant	
18	Director, Office of Detention Policy and Planning, U.S.	
19	Immigration and Customs	
20	Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security	
21	Mr. Richard "Rick" A. Smith, CEO, Securus Technologies, Inc.	
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                   AGENDA (Cont'd)
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        Panelists (Cont'd):
              Mr. Thomas Sweeney, Senior Vice
              President - Sales, Global
              Tel*Link
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  O/A Sesseion
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   Panel 4: New Technologies
         Co-Moderators:
 8
              Ms. Lynne Engledow, Assistant
 9
              Chief, Pricing Policy Division,
              Wireline Competition Bureau
10
              Mr. David Zesiger, Senior Counsel,
11
              Pricing Policy Division, Wireline
              Competition Bureau
12
         Panelists:
13
              Mr. Brian F. Byrne, Founder and
              Managing Partner, meshIP, LLC
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              Mr. Jay L. Gainsboro, Founder, JLG
              Technologies, LLC
16
              Mr. Grant Gongaware, Chief
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              Architect, Telmate, LLC
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              Mr. Chris Moore, Vice President -
              Product Management, Global
19
              Tel*Link
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  Q/A session
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                    A G E N D A (Cont'd)
2 Closing Remarks
 3
         Mr. Kalpak Gude, Chief, Pricing
         Policy Division, Wireline
         Competition Bureau
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	1	PROCEEDINGS	10
	2	CHAIRMAN WHEELER: Thank you for coming.	
	3	Roger, have I preempted you? Did you want to	
	4	start this show off?	
	5	MEMBER GOLDBLATT: You can.	
	6	CHAIRMAN WHEELER: No, you come on. You	
	7	got to I suddenly realize my role here is	
	8	behind you, sir.	
	9	MEMBER GOLDBLATT: I just want to go	
	10	over anyone who had questions, people watching	
	11	live on the Internet, send questions to	
	12	LiveQuestions@FCC.gov. We have people with index	
	13	cards for questions in the audience. Just raise	
	14	your hand and some of our staff will come around	
	15	and get it.	
	16	We have cards with new wireless code.	
	17	We have information on lunch; lunch will be 1:00	
	18	o'clock to 2:00 o'clock. We're tight schedule.	
	19	The only thing is just the this is	
	20	the one year, almost, anniversary of the first	
	21	workshop that we had on this subject, so it's kind	
	22	of exciting.	
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1 So now -- oh, the entire workshop will be video recorded, will be showing up -- we're -we're waiting for a transcriber, so we'll have a transcription soon, and with great pleasure, I now introduce Tom Wheeler, our Chairman. You might have met him before. 7 CHAIRMAN WHEELER: Thank you. So, thank you, Roger. I didn't know anything about lunch, 9 so I couldn't have been at all helpful about 10 lunch. But thank you, Roger. 11 We're here for one really simple reason 12 today, and that's because of Commissioner Clyburn 13 and her leadership on this important issue. Although, I guess I should say it is because of 15 Chairwoman Clyburn and her leadership on this 16 issue. 17 While she was Chairman of this Agency 18 she pulled this issue out of purgatory, kind of 19 the bowels of the Agency, and gave it the priority 20 that it deserves. We should all thank her for her 21 leadership in this. We should thank Commissioner Rosenworcel for her role in bringing this along. 22

- 1 But let's make sure that we fully recognize that
- 2 we are where we are today because of one person's
- 3 leadership.
- 4 Insofar as the Commission's current
- 5 plans, I have only three things to day. One, the
- 6 reform of Inmate Calling Services is a priority,
- 7 is a top priority for this Agency, and will remain
- 8 so.
- 9 Secondly, that we recognize that more
- 10 needs to be done. The interim interstate rate cap
- 11 needs to be made permanent, and intrastate
- 12 calling, which as you know is the majority of
- 13 calls, remains unreasonably high, and along with
- 14 the burgeoning ancillary fees that get put on, has
- 15 to be addressed if not attacked.
- 16 Thirdly, that Commissioner Clyburn
- 17 continues to be the person on point, and all of us
- 18 look to her for her leadership, and I can assure
- 19 you that I intend to follow her lead as she is our
- 20 north star on this issue.
- 21 So today it's my privilege to welcome
- 22 you to this workshop, and to introduce the person

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1	who is the reason why we are all here,	
2	Commissioner Clyburn.	
3	(Applause.)	
4	COMMISSIONER CLYBURN: Thank you so	
5	much, Mr. Chairman. I truly am continually	
6	grateful for your leadership and for the support	
7	that you have shown to me, and for this effort.	
8	Once again, good morning, everyone.	
9	Good morning, everyone.	
10	AUDIENCE: Good morning.	
11	COMMISSIONER CLYBURN: It's a good	
12	morning. Remember that.	
13	It is truly my pleasure to welcome you	
14	here today, as we analyze the impact of the FCC's	
15	2013 Inmate Calling Decision, and discuss the	
16	potential of additional reforms for Inmate Calling	
17	Services. We thank you all for coming, and wish	
18	to specially extend our appreciation to the	
19	outstanding participants in today's workshop.	
20	There are too many to mention, but allow	
21	me to recognize Darrell Baker from the Alabama	
22	Public Service Commission, and Kevin Landy (ph)	

- 1 from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement,
- 2 Department of Homeland Security.
- Reforming the Interstate Inmate Calling
- 4 regime last year was an extremely proud moment for
- 5 me and this Agency. The preceding language for
- 6 almost a decade denying friends, family, and
- 7 children of inmates relief from an egregious rate
- 8 structure, upwards of \$17 for a fifteen minute
- 9 call, and a \$4 connection for each call.
- 10 With the support of my colleague,
- 11 Commissioner Rosenworcel, we took action and found
- 12 that the existing rates were not in line with the
- 13 Communication's Act's requirement for just,
- 14 reasonable, and fair rates, and I just a few short
- 15 months what we are finding is that doing the right
- 16 things has reverberating benefits. Studies have
- 17 consistently shown that having meaningful contact
- 18 beyond prison walls can make a real difference in
- 19 maintaining community ties, promoting
- 20 rehabilitation, and reducing recidivism.
- 21 Making calls more affordable can
- 22 facilitate all of these objectives and more.

- 1 Recent data also show that reform is and was
- 2 critically needed. In April of 2014 the
- 3 Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice
- 4 Statistics released a report analyzing the five-
- 5 year recidivism rate in 30 states in 2005; over
- 6 400,000 prisoners were a result of this survey.
- 7 The report found that two-thirds, or
- 8 67.8 percent of prisoners were rearrested within
- 9 three years, and that three-quarters, or
- 10 approximately 76.6 percent we rearrested within
- 11 five years.
- This comes at a cost, and these costs
- 13 are enormous to us all. For in addition to the
- 14 impact of increased crime, crowded correctional
- 15 facilities, and the need to build expensive new
- 16 facilities, and not to mention the judicial time
- 17 to prosecute these offenses, studies estimate that
- 18 it costs an average of \$31,000 per year to house
- 19 each inmate.
- Not highlighted in this report, however
- 21 is the personal impact on families and
- 22 communities. There are 2.7 million children with

- 1 at least one parent in prison, and they often want
- 2 and need to maintain a connection.
- 3 In addition to coping with the anxiety
- 4 associated with a parent who is not there on a
- 5 regular basis, these young children are often
- 6 suffering severe economic and personal hardships,
- 7 and are often doing poorly in school, all of which
- 8 are exacerbated by unaffordable inmate calling
- 9 rates.
- So as a society we have an obligation to
- 11 do everything in our power to counter this. I
- 12 take this obligation seriously and remain
- 13 committed to making sure that the FCC does its
- 14 part to make basic phone calls for all affordable,
- 15 a requirement and a statute that for too long had
- 16 been ignored.
- 17 Last years order adopted rate caps for
- 18 interstate calls of \$.21 per minute for debit
- 19 calls, and \$.25 per minute for collect calls.
- 20 While still higher than I would have liked, the
- 21 relief for family and friends has been tremendous.
- 22 Since February when the rates went into

17 effect, I've heard from providers that call volumes have increased as much as 30 percent. 3 In addition to rate caps the Commission also made clear that regardless of the value of benefits, that site commissions may provide to inmates through welfare programs or other services, such payments should not be a part of the Inmate Calling Rates because they have no direct bearing on the cost of providing 10 communication services. 11 Although the D.C. Circuit did stay part of the reforms, the court left in place the 12 Commission's rate caps and critical findings on 13 the nature of site commissions. 14 15 While a critical first step, the FCC's order acknowledged that we have more work to do. We asked a series of questions in the further 17 18 notice of Proposed Rule Making on additional 19 reforms including permanent rate caps, extended reforms to intrastate rates, and reforms on 21 ancillary services. 22 To ensure that results are firmly

- 1 grounded on the best data, we also required that
- 2 all providers of inmate calling service file data
- 3 with their costs and that is due no later than
- 4 July 17th.
- 5 But today's workshop provides a unique
- 6 opportunity to evaluate the impact that these
- 7 reforms have had to date on inmates, consumers,
- 8 providers, and correctional facilities, and it
- 9 allows this agency to continue to ask how best to
- 10 structure additional reforms, to ensure just,
- 11 reasonable, and fair rates for both the consumer
- 12 as well as the provider.
- So as we evaluate our next steps, it
- 14 remains my hope that the states will follow the
- 15 FCC's lead, grab the baton, and enact their own
- 16 reforms. So I am particularly pleased that you
- 17 will hear today about Alabama's inmate calling
- 18 reforms adopted just last week.
- 19 Unfortunately, as I stand here, Alabama
- 20 is the exception, not the norm. Despite our cry
- 21 for intrastate reform, the call has largely gone
- 22 unanswered.

- I still hope, however, that other states
- 2 will move and do so soon. But I feel that the FCC
- 3 has both the duty and the authority to act under
- 4 the statute if the states so not, or cannot.
- 5 While I hope it will not come to that,
- 6 $\,$ if it does I will strive to find a path where FCC
- 7 reforms could act as a ceiling or default if
- 8 states have not or will not act.
- 9 After we adopted the reforms last year I
- 10 shared with staff, who worked so tirelessly on
- 11 this item, that this action will have an immediate
- 12 impact on people's lives.
- 13 Thank you notes came in almost
- 14 immediately, and thanks to the leadership and
- 15 support of Chairman Wheeler additional reforms to
- 16 the inmate calling regime remains a top priority.
- 17 So once again, I'd like to thank the
- 18 organizers of today's workshop. They have worked
- 19 long hard hours to put this together.
- 20 So to the Wire Line Bureau and Consumer
- 21 and Government Affairs Bureau, you are terrific.
- 22 Particularly Greg Hulegion (ph) and Lynne

- 1 Engledow. I always mess up names here; I'm really
- 2 famous for that, but thank you, nonetheless.
- 3 So now we'll turn the mic over to
- 4 Commissioner Rosenworcel who has been a friend and
- 5 supporter in this effort, and I again thank all of
- 6 you for this role in this -- your role in this
- 7 worthwhile effort.
- 8 Commissioner Rosenworcel.
- 9 (Applause.)
- 10 COMMISSIONER ROSENWORCEL: Good morning.
- 11 First of all, let me thank Chairman Wheeler, and
- 12 the staff of the Agency for holding this session
- 13 today. But most of all let me thank all of you for
- 14 being here and being a part of it.
- Now, I think when it comes to forces for
- 16 good in this world, you can usually find that
- 17 there are some strong women standing behind them,
- 18 and in this case there are two women you need to
- 19 know.
- The first is Martha Wright, who more
- 21 than ten years ago found that it was unreasonably
- 22 expensive for her family to communicate with her

- 1 grandson while he was incarcerated, and she
- 2 thought that wasn't right so she did something
- 3 that was extraordinary, just for a regular
- 4 citizen. She decided to petition the Federal
- 5 Communications Commission and pressure us to do
- 6 something about it.
- 7 So the second women you need to know is
- 8 my colleague Commissioner Clyburn who ten years
- 9 after that petition was filed dusted it off and
- 10 said it was more than time for action.
- 11 Under her leadership last year we did
- 12 something about this. We made sure that families
- 13 that are often separated by hundreds of miles from
- 14 their incarcerated brethren have an opportunity to
- 15 stay in touch.
- 16 We made sure that when they called their
- 17 family they don't actually have to spend as much
- 18 for a single phone call as everyone in this room
- 19 spends for their monthly unlimited wireless plan.
- 20 She thought that wasn't right, and I'm proud to
- 21 have joined her and done something about it.
- 22 But I don't think we're done. We've got

- a road ahead. We've got to figure out how to respond to the musing of a certain court. got to make sure those interim rate caps we put in place become permanent. We need to do something about ancillary charges, and then we need to work with our state counterparts, and not just Alabama, but in every state in this country to figure out how we can address the problem of intrastate 9 rates. 10 I think getting here today, gathering 11 like we are, is the start of it and I think if we all work together we can make sure that though 12 justice has been delayed, it won't be denied. 13
 - 15 (Applause.)

Thank you.

- 16 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you. Now,
- 17 will Panel One please come up and our moderator is
- 18 Kalpak and Rhonda, will be sitting over here.
- 19 MR. GUDE: It's not often are able to
- 20 start, not only on time, but a little early. So
- 21 hopefully this is a start of a good trend for
- 22 today.

- 1 I wanted to take the opening to thank
- 2 everyone for coming, particularly our
- 3 distinguished panel and all of our panels for the
- 4 day. I think we have set up a very interesting
- 5 program, and a set of discussions, which we hope
- 6 will further the understanding of the Commission,
- 7 and the understanding of all of us, on these
- 8 complicated issues with respect to ICS.
- 9 It is something, as you just heard from
- 10 the Chairman and from our Commissioners, this is
- 11 something that is on the top of the priority list
- 12 of a set of issues for the Commission to address.
- 13 My staff in the pricing division of the Wireline
- 14 Competition Bureau is tasked with handling it and
- 15 addressing it as quickly as possible, and we are
- 16 working a pace to move this along. I think this
- 17 workshop, and the continuing dialogue that we have
- 18 with others, is a strong effort to do that.
- 19 Let me start right off by introducing my
- 20 co-moderator, Rhonda Lien, who is a member of my
- 21 team in the Pricing Division, and I'll quickly
- 22 introduce the panelists, and then I think our plan

- 1 is to give each of the panelists five minutes to
- 2 introduce themselves and provide a presentation of
- 3 their thoughts on the issue, and then we will have
- 4 some questions that first the staff of the FCC
- 5 have put together, and then we'll open it up to
- 6 questions from the audience, from the Internet,
- 7 from far and wide.
- 8 This panel is, our panel one, is to
- 9 discuss the impact of reform and the potential
- 10 need for additional reform. Obviously, that's the
- 11 central issue of the day. We have some other
- 12 panels that will follow that get into more
- 13 details.
- 14 Our panelists include Darrell Baker, who
- 15 is from the Alabama Public Service Commission;
- 16 Cheryl Leanza, Policy Advisor from the United
- 17 Church of Christ; Talila Lewis from Helping
- 18 Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf, or
- 19 HEARD; Jesse Wiese, Policy Analyst at the Justice
- 20 Fellowship; Karina Wilkinson, from the New Jersey
- 21 Advocates for Immigrant Detainees; and Paul Wright
- 22 from Human Rights Defense Center.

- 1 So with that, I would like to turn it
- 2 over first to Mr. Baker to start us off. Thank
- 3 you very much.
- 4 MR. BAKER: Thank you. I thank the FCC
- 5 for the opportunity to participate in this
- 6 workshop and for consideration of my comments.
- 7 Alabama has an ongoing Inmate Calling
- 8 Service Reform Proceeding. Our second order
- 9 within the past 12 months was released Monday. In
- 10 2009 Alabama capped inmate calling service,
- 11 operator surcharges, and user rates.
- 12 I'm of the opinion that the reforms thus
- 13 far, though significant, have had very minimal
- 14 impact because the preponderance of inmate calling
- 15 is intrastate.
- 16 The ICS industry can be compared to a
- 17 multi chamber balloon. If you squeeze one chamber
- 18 the contents will simply displace to another.
- 19 Until both jurisdictions are addressed there will
- 20 be no substantive relief for the majority of
- 21 inmates and their families. Moreover, until
- 22 sources of ICS revenue in each jurisdiction are

- 1 addressed, the industry will simply adjust for
- 2 lost revenue in one area by charging more in
- 3 another.
- 4 The sources of revenue are calling
- 5 rates, ancillary charges, charges for single
- 6 payment services, and charges for other services,
- 7 such as video visitation, voice mail, etcetera.
- Further reforms are necessary. I
- 9 recommend a tiered rate structure. Cost supports
- 10 shows that jails are more expensive to serve than
- 11 prisons. Small jails are more expensive to serve
- 12 than large county or metropolitan jails.
- 13 Alabama's recommend ICS rates include lower rates
- 14 for prisons. Future intrastate call studies will
- 15 break this down even further.
- Ancillary charges or fees will be
- 17 addressed in Panel Two. For some providers end
- 18 user fees account for 40 percent or more of the
- 19 charges inmate families must pay.
- 20 Single payment services are inmate
- 21 collect calls billed to recipient's mobile phone
- 22 or to a credit card. The effective rates for

- 1 these calls are as high as \$1 per minute.
- 2 Moreover, such calls constitute a de facto
- 3 circumvention of regulated ICS call rates.
- 4 Providers will have you believe they
- 5 have no control over the prices charged by third
- 6 party services involved in single payment service.
- 7 That assertion is blatantly false. If providers
- 8 are permitted an alternative to regulated ICS
- 9 rates it will encourage migration of calls to the
- 10 more lucrative alternative. Since February alone
- 11 when the FCC's interim rates were implemented
- 12 several ICS providers quickly added their own
- 13 single payment service offerings.
- What is to prevent providers from
- 15 establishing third-party intermediaries for
- 16 prepaid, collect, and inmate debit service in
- 17 order to circumvent that regulated rate structure?
- 18 Continuous voice biometrics should be
- 19 separated from the rates. The FCC added two cents
- 20 per minute to Pay-Tel's prepaid, collect, and
- 21 inmate debit call cost to recover the cost for
- 22 continuous voice biometrics.

- 1 This is problematic because continuous voice biometrics is not provided in most confinement facilities. To my knowledge, it is provided nowhere in Alabama, therefore, most providers are charging rates that allow for continuous voice biometrics without actually offering it. Video visitation service and prices should be regulated. Providers will have you 10 believe that video visitation is not a 11 telecommunication service, and therefore not subject to our jurisdiction. Nevertheless, there 12 13 is a telephone instrument attached to the inmate's video visitation console and two attached to the 15 visitor's console. The parties converse via 16 phone. Some inmate providers are pressuring 17 18 confinement facilities to eliminate face-to-face 19 visitation with the lure of 20 percent site
 - 21 practices, which concern me.

20

22 Confinement facilities incur costs for

commissions. Providers are employing additional

providing ICS. Actual confinement facility costs must be identified and recovered via ICS rates or the facilities have no incentive for encouraging inmate's access to ICS, to ensure the equipment remains operational, and to pursue new service offerings for inmates and their families. 7 When a single provider embarks on a strategy to control the industry and therefore 9 exerts its will with regards to cost that all 10 providers must incur, future cost savings are 11 constrained, as are potential price reductions. Additionally, such conditions may present a 12 barrier for new market entrance. 13 Currently, one dominant ICS provider 14 15 controls more than 75 percent of all the patents 16 in the ICS industry, and is actively shopping for 17 additional patents to add to its portfolio. 18 competitors must enter licensing agreements with 19 the provider or face the threat of litigation. 20 The Department of Justice has well 21 recognized guidelines for analyzing the level of consolidation within a particular industry in 22

- 1 determining whether that level of consolidation
- 2 represents market power and/or antitrust concerns.
- 3 I raise this issue in order that the FCC, DOJ, or
- 4 other Federal agencies may consider reviewing the
- 5 (inaudible) practices being in the ICS industry,
- 6 and determine whether the practices employed by
- 7 one dominant provider are anti-competitive and an
- 8 attempt to control industry prices.
- 9 Before I finish I wish to acknowledge
- 10 Doug Dillard; we are a two-man show in Alabama.
- 11 Doug Dillard's on my staff and has spent the past
- 12 16 years researching this industry, inspecting
- 13 jails, talking to inmates, and corresponding with
- 14 sheriffs in Alabama. I thank you.
- 15 MR. GUDE: Thank you. Cheryl?
- MS. LEANZA: Great. Hi, good morning,
- 17 everyone.
- 18 I want to thank my colleague Mr. Baker
- 19 for that really compelling testimony.
- 20 So I am here on behalf of the United
- 21 Church of Christ. It's called OC Inc., is the
- 22 Media Justice and Communication Rights Ministry of

- 1 the UCC. The ministry is actually celebrating
- 2 this year the 50th anniversary of the lawsuit that
- 3 originally gave citizens the right to have
- 4 standing and participate at Federal Communications
- 5 Commission proceedings, so we're delighted to be
- 6 here and see the fruits of that today, to see all
- 7 these regular people here participating in an
- 8 agency.
- 9 Like I think many people here today, I
- 10 am also here to express extreme thanks to that
- 11 Agency, to Commissioner Clyburn for her leadership
- 12 while she was acting chair, and everybody who has
- 13 helped move this issue forward, and taken a ten
- 14 year old petition and at least made that a
- 15 reality.
- I have, actually, a couple of examples
- 17 just as tokens. We talked about thank you notes,
- 18 and I have a couple of thank notes from the state
- 19 prison in Bridgeport, New Jersey, actually.
- I just wanted to share these because,
- 21 you know, these are inmates who wrote this letter
- 22 to Chairwomen and Commissioner Clyburn to tell her

- 1 thank you, and I think as all of us in Washington,
- 2 D.C., know although we know that the Federal
- 3 Communications Commission impacts people's daily
- 4 lives, we on the inside, or even know where the
- 5 FCC is know that, it's rare that regular ordinary
- 6 people know that a federal agency has not only
- 7 impacted their lives, but done something to make
- 8 it better, and then that they wrote a thank you
- 9 note.
- 10 Not only has this very fancy thank you
- 11 note come in, but also this very plain two words
- 12 on a piece of paper ripped off the top of a card,
- 13 and I think it shows, you know, who here is --
- 14 they're in prison, and what are thinking about?
- 15 They're ripping off a piece of paper to write a
- 16 note to say thank you. Like, this is not a small
- 17 thing, even though it's just two words on a piece
- 18 of paper.
- 19 So I want to be sure that -- I will
- 20 submit these for the record, but I just wanted to
- 21 show and illustrate the impact and the benefit,
- 22 even though I think we have a long road to go, I

think there's people who this is impacting know

that it's impacted them and they're grateful for the change. So that's really beautiful. One of the things that Unitized Church of Christ was able to contribute after the order that I also wanted to share for the record, was 7 just some basic materials for families and for prisoners, and I'm sharing it today in large part because I want to be sure that lots of people are 10 able to utilize them if -- it's still a pretty 11 recent decision; February wasn't actually that long ago in the lives of many people, even though 12 13 it was snowing then and now it's hot. So we have a few things, the website is 14 15 UCCmediajustice.org. But they're very simple

I want to thank the FCC, which has been

FAQ's, what do I do links to state commissions if

you're having trouble with your local calls, so I

want that to be available to people, and I -- sort

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of an illustration.

- 21 a pretty good partner. We had a lot of meetings
- 22 as we led up to the implementation of the decision

- 1 to make sure that people would be able to use the
- 2 decision, that would really benefit them, and so
- 3 they can always call the FCC's national call
- 4 number, 888-CALLFCC, if they have trouble.
- 5 But one of the things that I would
- 6 encourage the FCC to do, as we're all trying to
- 7 grapple with this new decision, and evaluate its
- 8 impact, is to go and look into its own data, into
- 9 its own call center, into the bureaus that collect
- 10 the information from the general public, tote that
- 11 up, share that.
- 12 Let's pinpoint, are there places where
- 13 we're seeing more calls or not, let's try to
- 14 figure out if there's places that need more
- 15 outreach, some people don't even know about it
- 16 yet. You know, we should be seeing some activity
- 17 there now that the rules are in place, and it
- 18 would be useful to do that.
- 19 So of the recommendations I have, both
- 20 now for the current decision, but then for other
- 21 future decisions, is to be sure the FCC is really
- 22 in a very affirmative posture. They have been

great, but I think at this point, now that we're -- if we're having a workshop, then let's see what the FCC has in its data sites. So those are two things that I was here 4 -- the third thing I'm here to talk about today is just to really ask the FCC to move ahead on the local rates. As my colleague said, the majority of calls, especially when you talk about a jail, are local calls and many calls, even in prison, 10 are local calls. 11 There are, unfortunately I think, there are a number of sheriffs around the country that 12 13 have been very vocal at the FCC docket asking to the FCC to provide them special accommodation, and 14 15 I think -- you know, we certainly should have a 16 conversation about what's going on there, but I 17 wanted to highlight, in fact, the example of the 18 sheriff in San Francisco, Ross Mirkarimi, and I'm going one to probably slaughter his name, but --19 20 who is actually working to bring down the rates in 21 his jail because he thinks they're too high, and 22 he called the high rates that were being charged

- 1 in the San Francisco jail immoral.
- 2 He said that 39 percent of the men and
- 3 women in his jail in San Francisco are parents,
- 4 and he releases some data, which I'll also submit
- 5 to the record; it was actually documented in the
- 6 San Francisco Chronicle, but 82 percent of the
- 7 300,000 calls in about a year from his jail are
- 8 local calls.
- 9 So the FCC's decision did a lot, but it
- 10 certainly did help for large numbers of the people
- 11 who are in the jail in San Francisco.
- 12 So in sum, I want to thank the FCC for
- 13 the opportunity and the hard work, and hope that
- 14 we can move ahead, looking not only at local
- 15 rates, but some of the other important issues,
- 16 like my colleague Talila will be talking about,
- 17 the rights for disabilities; I think there's a
- 18 number of pieces of unfinished business left.
- 19 Thank you.
- 20 MR. GUDE: Thank you, Cheryl. Talila?
- MS. LEWIS: Good morning, everyone.
- 22 First, I would like recognize members of

- 1 the deaf and disability community who are here
- 2 with us today signaling our deep and unwavering
- 3 commitment to universal access and equality, and
- 4 then secondly, of course I would like thank the
- 5 FCC for hosting this panel and for seeing fit to
- 6 put me on it.
- 7 One year ago I sat here at this table
- 8 and I was very hopeful that or leadership would
- 9 take positive steps toward ensuring that Inmate
- 10 Calling Services were affordable and accessible
- 11 for all prisoners and their families.
- 12 Among other things, I shared that inmate
- 13 calling service providers, departments of
- 14 corrections across the nation, were both in
- 15 violation of federal disability rights laws that
- 16 mandate equal access to programs, services, and
- 17 activities for all people with disabilities.
- 18 I explained that accessible
- 19 telecommunications is paramount for deaf
- 20 prisoners, particularly because their
- 21 incarceration is filled with language depravation
- 22 that is not compared to a hearing prisoner's.

- 1 Also, their incarceration is filled with physical
- 2 and sexual assault, not compared to prisoners who
- 3 are fully able bodied, and who are hearing.
- 4 Also because of their incarceration
- 5 experience is filled with depressing isolation
- 6 that leads to mental health conditions that
- 7 actually require that they actually have more
- 8 contact with people who can communicate in a way
- 9 that is effective for them.
- I also shared that the FCC's own reports
- 11 indicate that TTY calls are 12 percent of the
- 12 total relay volume in the United States and that
- 13 75 percent of all accessible telephone calls made
- 14 through relay in the United States are actually
- 15 made through video phones. But despite that fact,
- 16 at that time, only three prisons across the nation
- 17 had videophones installed.
- 18 Today we are all here again holding out
- 19 hope for meaningful action from our leadership
- 20 because notwithstanding the Commission's September
- 21 26th order, thousands of deaf and hard of hearing
- 22 prisoners across the nation, and prisoners with

- 1 speech challenges are continuously and continually
- 2 disconnected and cannot communicate with family,
- 3 loved ones, advocates, anyone.
- While we applaud the Commission's
- 5 efforts to ensure that rates for Inmate Calling
- 6 Services are just, reasonable, and fair, we again
- 7 remind the Commission that there is no fairness
- 8 without equality. Anything short of a Commission
- 9 order mandating universal accessibility for Inmate
- 10 Calling Services for departments of corrections
- 11 across the United States will leave countless
- 12 prisoners and their family members exactly where
- 13 they were prior to the Commission's decision,
- 14 which is completely disconnected.
- 15 HEARD's deaf prisoner phone justice
- 16 campaign, which is now in its 18th month,
- 17 mobilized unprecedented participation from deaf
- 18 prisoners across the nation. More than 100 deaf
- 19 prisoners submitted comments, as did family
- 20 members of deaf prisoners, deaf family members
- 21 with hearing incarcerated loved ones, and
- 22 organizations including the American Civil

40 1 Liberties Union. 2 Among other things, these prisoners requested very basic things like operational, affordable, and equal telecommunications access, including videophones, caption telephones, working TTY's that they actually have access to, and rates 7 that take into account the despairingly slow and consistently unreliable communication via TTY from 9 prison. 10 Last year I believed that simple principals of equity and justice would lead those 11 in positions of power down the right road, and so 12 I spared you many details of what goes on in our 13 prison system for people who have disabilities, 15 and people who are deaf. 16 I did not tell you that in the past 17 three years there have been just three weeks where 18 I did not receive a report from a deaf prisoner, 19 and advocate, or a loved one about physical or 20 sexual assault of a deaf prisoner. That countless 21 deaf prisoners do not sleep or shower for fear of sexual assault. That deaf prisoners have traded 22

41 their bodies to make telephone calls with loved ones through hearing prisoners who have complete and full access to telecommunications. I did not tell you that as rampant as 4 sexual assault is against people with disabilities 5 and deaf prisoners in our justice system, or 7 correction system, that of the 500 prisoners that we have found, not one can access the stop rate hotlines or the FCC hotline that Cheryl here just 10 mentioned, to make note of the things that are 11 going on in our prisons. That is how isolating being deaf in our prisons is with the current 12 13 system. I have not told you how multiple cases 14 15 of deaf wrongful conviction that HEARD believes 16 are probably cases of wrongful conviction, we 17 cannot even investigate because we cannot 18 communicate with those who communicate in ASL, 19 because video phones are not set up in prisons 20 across the nation. 21 I did not share that deaf prisoners 22 report abuse most often after filing grievances

- 1 about lack of communication access at prisons,
- 2 including lack of access to telecommunications.
- 3 Or that solitary confinement is often used as a
- 4 substitute for the provision of accommodations
- 5 for, and protections to, this group of
- 6 individuals.
- 7 I share these to illustrate two main
- 8 things. The first is that there's an ongoing
- 9 crisis in our prisons, particularly related to
- 10 conditions of confinement for people with
- 11 disabilities, and people who are deaf, and second
- 12 to dispel the myth that this is a deaf problem,
- 13 that this is an incarcerated person problem; this
- 14 is an American and societal problem that needs to
- 15 be addressed immediately.
- 16 Since all departments of corrections and
- 17 ICS's have the same requirements under federal
- 18 law, that all people with disabilities should be
- 19 included, not retaliated against, and have equal
- 20 access to programs, services, and activities at
- 21 any prison receiving federal funding, and in any
- 22 public accommodation, which the Supreme Court has

- 1 determined that prison are a public accommodation,
- 2 and that the Supreme Court has established that
- 3 everything that we determine about conditions of
- 4 confinement should be based on the concept of
- 5 evolving standards of decency, then we should make
- 6 sure that ICS companies, providers, and
- 7 departments of corrections are fully aware of
- 8 disability rights, and what disability access
- 9 looks like.
- 10 The only way to do that is from our
- 11 people in positions of power, people in the
- 12 Federal Communications Commission, people at the
- 13 Department of Justice, please take action on this
- 14 issue.
- I have other information about state
- 16 campaigns but I will hold those for questions.
- 17 Thank you.
- 18 MR. GUDE: Thank you. Jesse?
- 19 MR. WIESE: Thank you. Thank you to our
- 20 moderators, Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner
- 21 Clyburn, and Commission Rosenworcel.
- Justice Fellowship is the advocacy

- 1 division of Prison Fellowship Ministries and works
- 2 to reform the criminal justice system by advancing
- 3 the principals of restorative justice.
- 4 Prison Fellowship is currently active in
- 5 over 380 prisons in the United States and remains
- 6 the largest prison ministry in the world.
- 7 Through Justice Fellowship, Prison
- 8 Fellowship Ministries has advocated for Inmate
- 9 Calling Service reform for several decades, and
- 10 its grateful to the Federal Communications
- 11 Commission for recognizing this as an important
- 12 issue, and for adopting reasonable rate caps for
- 13 interstate phone calls.
- 14 Though the impact of interstate only
- 15 reforms may not appear to be substantial in light
- 16 of the larger problem of intrastate calls, it is
- 17 important, I think, to emphasize that these
- 18 reforms do provide a positive impact on thousands
- 19 of family's budgets.
- 20 As someone who was incarcerated for over
- 21 seven years with the majority of my family being
- 22 out of state, I can personally attest that this

45 simple reform would have saved my family thousands of dollars. 3 In addition to these long await fiscal savings these reforms have an impact on public safety. Research has shown that maintaining family relationships is a significant factor in the reduction of recidivism. 8 For example, the Jane Adams Center for Social Policy and Research determined that family 10 roles and relationships are important in reentry 11 planning. Family connections and other social networks impact not only families and children's 12 well being, but also the achievement of social 13 goals such as the reduction of crime, and the building of vibrant communities. 15 Additional research shows that released 16 17 prisoners who had closer family relationships and 18 stronger family support, were more likely to have 19 worked after release and were less likely to have 20 used drugs. 21 These findings have long been recognized by corrections officials, and even the Federal

- 1 Bureau of Prisons states that telephone privileges
- 2 are a supplemental means of maintaining community
- 3 and family ties that will contribute to an
- 4 inmate's personal development.
- 5 When released prisoners have a
- 6 supportive family they are more likely to find a
- 7 job, less likely to use drugs, and less likely to
- 8 be involved in criminal activities.
- 9 Creating easily accessible and
- 10 affordable communication mediums helps maintain,
- 11 and in many instances, rebuild these important
- 12 family ties.
- 13 In light of this public safety impact, I
- 14 would strongly encourage the FCC to extend the
- 15 price caps to other communications within it
- 16 jurisdictional authority, such as international
- 17 calls. I would also suggest that the Commission
- 18 begin to closely monitor the costs of other
- 19 interstate communication mediums, such as email,
- 20 video conferencing, and voicemail.
- 21 Long distance communication by telephone
- 22 is quickly becoming a medium of the past, and

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though the bureaucracy of corrections is typically slow to implement technological changes, state and federal corrections are beginning to shift to more advanced communication methods, and if history is any indicator, it is only a matter of time before these updated forms of communication will be 7 subject to the current immoral policies we find ourselves fighting today. 9 Despite the Commission's recent reforms on interstate calls, there is still much work to 10 11 be done in bringing relief to the millions of American families with an incarcerated loved one 12 13 who reside in the same state. Intrastate calls vastly outnumber 14 15 interstate calls and much of the heavy lifting is 16 now left to the states. 17 Though we don't believe the Commission 18 should regulate intrastate calls, it can still be a vital part of the reform process by becoming a 19 20 substantial resource for state public utility 21 commissions that desire to implement similar 22 reforms.

1	Assisting state public utility
2	commissions and organizations such as the National
3	Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners to
4	provide educational forums such as the one we are
5	sitting at today, or workshops on how to
6	successfully implement similar inmate calling
7	service reforms at the state level, as well as
8	encouraging other forms of communication, could be
9	very helpful in advancing meaningful reform.
10	Justice Fellowship strongly believes
11	that these unjust prison telephone policies must
12	be eradicated.
13	Adopting such policy reforms will
14	facilitate more communication between incarcerated
15	men and women and their families enabling them to
16	draw from the encouragement and accountability
17	that those relationships provide.
18	Keeping these relationships a priority
19	enhances the well-being of men and women who are
20	incarcerated, and protects the well-being of our
21	communities.
22	Justice Fellowship looks forward to

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	1	continuing this dialogue with the FCC, and will	
	2	continue to work with the state and local	
	3	governments on this important reform.	
	4	Thank you.	
	5	MR. GUDE: Thank you, Jesse.	
	6	Karina?	
	7	MS. WILKINSON: Hi. I also want to	
	8	thank the Commission for the opportunity to speak	
	9	here today, and for their leadership.	
	10	New Jersey has high rates and	
	11	commissions, and just two inmate phone service	
	12	providers operating in the state, Global Tel Link	
	13	and Securus, so I wanted to describe the changes	
	14	that have happened since the FCC order was	
	15	implemented.	
	16	For state prisons the Department of	
	17	Corrections in New Jersey eliminated their	
	18	commission that netted the state \$4 million last	
	19	year, and dropped the flat rate of \$.33 eventually	
	20	to \$.17 for both inter and intrastate calls. The	
	21	initial negotiations dropped the rate to \$.19 on	
	22	February 11th, and then separate negotiations on	
1			

- 1 the March contract renewal dropped it to \$.17.
- 2 Neither the state nor the counties
- 3 negotiated any change for the intrastate rates for
- 4 the county jails, they only changed the interstate
- 5 rates to meet the caps and the phone companies
- 6 eliminated the commission on the interstate calls
- 7 only.
- 8 So intrastate rates remain high, in some
- 9 cases more than twice as much as the interstate
- 10 cap, so the calls are \$7.75 or \$8.50 for a 15-
- 11 minute call in most of the counties in New Jersey.
- 12 Prior to the order some of the interstate rates
- 13 has been as high as \$15 for 15 minutes.
- Bergan County, New Jersey, is the only
- 15 county that independently contracts with Global
- 16 Tel Link. Though public records requests we
- 17 received a letter from Global Tel Link to Bergan
- 18 County Sheriff's Department offering to raise
- 19 other rates and fees, presumably the interstate
- 20 rates, to offset the losses from GTL's eliminating
- 21 the commission on interstate calls following the
- 22 FCC order.

51 1 Bergan County is scheduled to put out a 2 request for proposals for a new contract sometime 3 this summer. The board had approved the request going out last December. Though either of the two ways that the 5 counties can contract independently or though the 6 7 state contract, no county takes less than 50 percent commission. The highest in New Jersey is 9 70 percent. 10 In terms of our New Jersey Phone Justice campaign, we had already been gathering the data 11 from the state DOC and all the counties, and last 12 year we had updated all that data. Once the order 13 went into effect we redid our public records 14 15 request to see what changes had happened. 16 Over the past several year's attempts 17 have been made to get similar legislation to what 18 the legislation that exists in New York, where 19 they eliminated commissions and made the winning 20 bids have lowest rates rather than highest commissions. 2.1 22 The governor in New Jersey and the

- 1 legislature overall where unwilling to make the
- 2 sacrifice, though we have support from individual
- 3 legislators.
- 4 In response to the FCC order the state
- 5 eliminated the commissions but the contract is up
- 6 for renewal in September. The county intrastate
- 7 rates, except for the most local calls, as I said,
- 8 remain higher than the new interstate rates.
- 9 We have consistently heard from
- 10 immigrant detainees about the burdens of high
- 11 rates, and because most of the rates weren't
- 12 coming down to even the safe harbor rate, and
- 13 because we saw little change of getting
- 14 legislation, in late April our coalition filed a
- 15 petition with the New Jersey Board of Public
- 16 Utilities asking them to regulate rates and cap
- 17 them at \$.05 per minute, comparable to what New
- 18 York State has, and we also asked for the
- 19 elimination of commissions.
- 20 You can find our petition at
- 21 NJPhoneJustice.org. The petition was filed in
- 22 collaboration with the New York University School

- 1 of Law, Immigrant's Rights Clinic, Latino Justice
- 2 Praldev (ph), the New Jersey Institute for Social
- 3 Justice, and the Firm of DLA Piper. They all
- 4 worked on the petition and we have many more
- 5 supporting organizations, including the ACLU of
- 6 New Jersey.
- 7 We came to the issue because New Jersey
- 8 has some 2,000 jail beds that are contracted for
- 9 use by Immigration and Customers Enforcement.
- 10 Immigrant detainees, since they are in
- 11 administrative proceedings, have no right to an
- 12 attorney if they cannot afford one for their
- 13 immigration cases. They need to gather documents
- 14 to present to the court, so having fair phone
- 15 rates is critical for them.
- 16 The other thing that I'll mention is
- 17 that we started in Newark because we discovered
- 18 that as the expansion of detention beds in Newark
- 19 was taking place a new contract was signed between
- 20 Homeland Security and Essex County in 2012, and in
- 21 that contract the county was prohibited from
- 22 commissions on immigrant detainees calls.

We wrote to the county executive and

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- informed ICE's Newark Field Office Director. The 2 written response from the county was that they would not eliminate the commissions, and would only lower phone costs if they would keep the revenue the same. 7 So we calculated that the county makes approximately \$900,000 per year on calls by 9 inmates and detainees, so they're tied to the 10 state contract so any renewal or change in the 11 commissions for Essex County would also come up in September. Thank you. 12
- MR. WRIGHT: Hi, I'm Paul Wright from
- 16 the Human Rights Defense Center, I'd like to thank

MR. GUDE: Thank you, Karina. Finally,

- 17 the FCC Commission for inviting me to speak today,
- 18 and I'd also like to thank the Commission two for
- 19 the leadership its shown on the issue of prison
- 20 phone rates.

Paul?

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- 21 The Human Rights Defense Center was also
- 22 one of the organizations that founded the Prison

- 1 Phone Justice Campaign to bring public awareness
- 2 and attention to the issue of prison phone rates,
- 3 and we encouraged the FCC to act starting back in
- 4 2011, and while the interim rate caps have been
- 5 great, as we heard from previous speakers, there's
- 6 a lot to be done.
- 7 One of the things that is still an
- 8 issue, of course, is the issue of jails and calls
- 9 from local detention facilities and the in-state
- 10 calling rates.
- 11 Some of the things, as far as numbers
- 12 go, is we looked at the Los Angeles Jail, it's the
- 13 largest jail in the country, and their phone rates
- 14 are also among the highest. The jail receives a
- 15 67 percent commission on the phone calls made, and
- 16 that's totaling over \$40 million a year.
- 17 When we think about the numbers, on any
- 18 given day the Los Angeles Jail is averaging around
- 19 21,000 prisoners a day, which is larger than the
- 20 populations of the five smallest prison systems
- 21 combined. For example, it's more than the prison
- 22 system of the State of Vermont, which around 1,500

- 1 to 1,800 prisoners. So the numbers are fairly
- 2 large and there's a lot that remains to be done.
- 3 So far we have eight states that do not
- 4 receive commissions on their phone calls, and I
- 5 thin its telling that in all eight of those
- 6 examples the decision to not accept commissions
- 7 from the telecom industry was the result of
- 8 outside action from the utilities commission, the
- 9 legislature, or the government's office through
- 10 executive action.
- 11 I think it's also critical that we note
- 12 that in no cases that a requirement, or a demand,
- 13 that prison and jail accept commissions or
- 14 kickback from the telecom industry and they gouge
- 15 consumers. In fact, it's a perverse world indeed
- 16 where we have a situation where contracts are bid
- 17 out based on how much money is going to go to the
- 18 agency rather than who can provide the lowest cost
- 19 to the consumer.
- 20 In at least four states, this includes
- 21 Virginia, Colorado, Florida, and Tennessee, the
- 22 utilities commission either does not have

- 1 authority, or the courts have held they do not
- 2 have authority to regulate the cost of prison
- 3 telephone calls, which leaves the FCC as the only
- 4 regulatory body that would have that authority to
- 5 do so.
- 6 The previous speakers have noted the
- 7 high impact that ancillary fees have also caused
- 8 on consumers who receive calls from people in
- 9 detention facilities. This continues to be an
- 10 ongoing issue, and in fact is one that's largely
- 11 been unaddressed by most of the regulatory reforms
- 12 we've seen in different parts of the country.
- 13 Some of the utility commissions that
- 14 have tried to address this have been the Louisiana
- 15 utilities commission, and despite an order that
- 16 the cease collecting the ancillary fees, the
- 17 telecoms in that state have continued to do so in
- 18 defiance of the state utilities commission.
- 19 Some of the issues that we've also seen
- 20 too, I think as Commissioner Baker referred to is
- 21 as the balloon that you step on in one place it
- 22 bulges out somewhere else, is we also see some of

the contracts, for example, in Washington state -in Washington State, which has historically had some of the highest prison phone rates in the country, the Washington DOC has received a \$5.1 million upfront fee at the signing of the contract each year, and one of the things is that they don't have a -- they do not have -- the calls are not being billed per minute, rather the calls are being billed on the flat fee for a 15 to 20 minute 10 call, which results in a very high individual per 11 minute fee, if that's calculated out. 12 We also have situations there were many times the calls are not able to be for the entire 13 20 minute duration, rather they're cut off before 14 15 then. We also have quality of service issues that 16 permeates the ICS industry as well, that are not 17 really addressed by the issue of fees. 18 For example, calls that are prematurely 19 terminated resulting in call backs and more fees 20 and more charges. These, I think are issues that 21 need to be addressed by the FCC as sell. 22 So we'd like to applaud the fact that

- 1 FCC has shown leadership on this issue, and needs
- 2 to continue to show the leadership and enforce its
- 3 statutory duty and responsibility to ensure that
- 4 all consumers have access to fair and reasonable
- 5 phone rates, even if those consumers have loved
- 6 ones who are in detention facilities.
- 7 Nothing will show prisoners that the law
- 8 applies to everyone more than enforcing the rule
- 9 of law for everyone, even prisoners and their
- 10 families, and protecting them from rapacious
- 11 gouging by ICS providers and the government
- 12 agencies, and ending the process of monetizing
- 13 human contact.
- Recognizing the right to communication
- 15 as a human right and a fundamental one that should
- 16 not monetized, and enforcing the FCC's mandate
- 17 that phone rates be reasonable and fair is, I
- 18 think the obligation of the FCC and one that we
- 19 hope they will extend to the instate phone calls
- 20 as well. Thank you very much.
- 21 MR. GUDE: Thank you very much. I think
- 22 that was very helpful. Now, I'd like to start out

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- with a discussion and really open it up for folks
- to share your thoughts across so we make ask
- questions to individuals, but feel free to jump
- in, even if your name wasn't called for the
- question, and feel free to share your thoughts.
- Cheryl?
- 7 MS. LEANZA: May I just make one point?
- I know both Darrell and Paul had mentioned
- 9 something about the differences between jails and
- 10 prisons, and that's a very important point, and I
- 11 do want to mention that we'll be discussing it
- later this afternoon in Panel Three. So we will 12
- 13 circle back and talk about that later.
- 14 MR. GUDE: Okay. But the first question
- 15 I wanted to ask is, as we have investigated the
- 16 issue, clearly site commissions is a running
- 17 theme, and we've heard it in many of your opening
- 18 comments as well. We've heard it from all sides in
- 19 this debate that site commissions are a
- 20 significant, if not the significant driver of
- 21 costs in very high phone rates in the ICS
- 22 industry.

61 On the other hand, we've heard from 1 facilities saying the charges, or the payments, the site commission payments that are made, are used for many times critical services that benefit inmates, benefit those incarcerated individuals, whether it be through different simple things of board games and entertainment, whether it be blankets, whether it GED programs; lots of other 9 inmate benefits, or services. 10 The question that we have as a Commission is, one, is it appropriate and 11 consistent with the Act for the Commission to even 12 look at that? The Act itself says just, 13 reasonable, and fair. So is that even appropriate 15 for the Commission to look at? 16 But from a consumer end, from an 17 advocate for inmates, what are your thoughts on 18 the potential loss of such services, and how that 19 would play out? 20 MR. WRIGHT: I'd like to address that. 21 I think as far as -- this is one of the excuses that I think has been used as a reason and a 22

- 1 rational to try to maintain these high kickbacks.
- 2 In some states, for example Georgia, the Georgia
- 3 Department of Corrections states that it uses the
- 4 bulk of the phone commissions that are received to
- 5 provide mental health treatment for mentally ill
- 6 prisoners.
- 7 I think it's one of those things that
- 8 once a state chooses to incarcerate people the
- 9 have certain constitutional obligations to meet
- 10 and providing mental healthcare is one of those
- 11 obligations, and does anyone really think that the
- 12 State of Georgia is going to stop providing mental
- 13 health care treatment, force mentally ill
- 14 prisoners, if say for example, prisoners stop
- 15 making phone calls. These are, I think, some of
- 16 the fallacies with this.
- I think it's also critical to note that
- 18 there's no obligation or statutory duty that -- as
- 19 to what states do with the money the received from
- 20 the phone commissions that they receive, and some
- 21 states it reverts to the general fund, in other
- 22 states it may go to Department of Corrections, and

- 1 there's no obligation or duty that the money
- 2 actually go to benefit prisoners.
- 3 Even if it does, I think we're
- 4 forgetting that we're not writing on blank state
- 5 here. Prisons have had telephone services since
- 6 the early 1970s. The commissions and the kickback
- 7 model did not come into vogue until the late
- 8 1980s. So we have a 20-year period where services
- 9 were provided to prisoners and they were paid for
- 10 from other sources, such as commissary sales,
- 11 donations, and other means.
- 12 So it's not like if the money goes away
- 13 these services are not going to be provided, and
- 14 we have the example of eight states that
- 15 eliminated commissions. New York State was
- 16 receiving over \$20 million a year from phone
- 17 commissions before they eliminated commissions.
- 18 Last I heard the New York Department of
- 19 Correctional Services are still functioning and
- 20 services are still being provided to prisoners, so
- 21 I would respectfully submit to the FCC that this
- 22 whole argument is, for lack of a better term, a

- 1 red herring.
- MS. LIEN: I just wanted to make two
- 3 points. I just want to make two points on top of
- 4 Paul's excellent advocacy, as always. First of
- 5 all what's really inappropriate about these fees
- 6 is that they fall disproportionately and only on
- 7 the families of the incarcerated. We don't have -
- 8 when we have taxes to take care of our public
- 9 parks and our national defense we don't tax on
- 10 particular part -- if you're a family of soldier
- 11 then you have to pay more to call them, because
- 12 it's really expensive to run the Army. I mean,
- 13 that's not fair.
- 14 That's -- these people already are
- 15 undergoing a lot of difficulty in their lives,
- 16 there's no reason why friends and family have to
- 17 be the one to support the services that are
- 18 required to be given, as Paul said.
- 19 I think the second thing goes to a
- 20 Communications Act point, which is that, no,
- 21 unfortunately the FCC, whether it's good or not
- 22 good, the FCC is not permitted to allow an

- 1 unreasonable rate because it's done for a good
- 2 cause. If Verizon suddenly wanted to charge
- 3 certain mobile phone users a really high rate, but
- 4 they're like, but don't worry, we're going to take
- 5 all the money and we're going to give it to a
- 6 really good cause, it's still illegal; you can't
- 7 do it.
- 8 So I mean, I think whatever the
- 9 justification is in the minds of the folks who are
- 10 collecting those fees, the Federal Communications
- 11 Commission has to enforce its statute, which I
- 12 think has a consequence of actually being fair
- 13 because you don't want certain consumers to
- 14 subsidize particular services, that's very unfair,
- 15 but I don't think that the Commission really has
- 16 the ability to look to into it, even if it wanted
- 17 t.o.
- 18 MR. GUDE: Thank you. Darrell, I wanted
- 19 to bring you into this conversation, willingly or
- 20 unwillingly, because I know this has been a
- 21 challenge for everyone looking at this industry,
- 22 and your thoughts on this question, and the

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- broader challenges that you faced as Alabama
- 2 looked at reform.
- MR. BAKER: Well, I'm not here to 3
- advocate for or advocate against site commissions.
- The way that we look at it is the have been a
- fact, they are there, and at the state and local
- level governments are required to balance their
- budgets. So we have to consider the public
- interest, in terms of those budgets and policy
- 10 makers have to be given an opportunity to adjust
- 11 if those site commissions are reduced.
- 12 I think it would be equally wrong to
- come in and immediately flash cut and say you have 13
- to remove this from your budget, and then you
- 15 create a funding crisis at the state and local
- 16 level.
- 17 So that's why Alabama is looking at
- 18 transitioning these rates down.
- 19 MS. LIEN: Jesse, I have a question for
- 20 you, you mentioned that you don't believe that the
- 21 FCC should regulate local calls. You want to
- 22 expand on that for us, please?

67 1 MR. WIESE: You had to ask me that 2 question. Yeah, I will just enter a caveat; I'm not an expert here, but just jurisdictionally from what I've looked at, but listening to Peter here on states that may have determined that they cannot regulate the calls within the state, their 6 7 utility commission, perhaps the FCC may have 8 jurisdiction. So I'd have to look into that a 9 little bit more. 10 But just from our perspective organizationally, we are strong believers in 11 federalism so trying to keep the reach of the FCC 12 within its property boundaries, as well as trying 13 to utilize the great reform that's happened here 15 in other states as well. So just trying to marry 16 the two there. MS. LIEN: 17 I'd like to follow up a 18 little bit with Darrell. You've mentioned a few 19 points; you've talked a lot about what's happened 20 in Alabama. Can you just back up a little bit and 21 perhaps give us a little bit higher level view of 22 what has led to the very hard work, and the

- 1 granted interim, but the reforms that led to the
- 2 order that came out on Monday afternoon?
- MR. BAKER: We actually began our look
- 4 at reforming Inmate Calling Service approximately
- 5 ten months before the FCC order came out, and our
- 6 order came out in October of 2013. There was a
- 7 comment cycle, and since that comment cycle we
- 8 have developed this order and put a lot more
- 9 research into the industry, and what's going on,
- 10 and there is a comment cycle for this order that
- 11 will last to August 11th. Then the proposed
- 12 implementation date is October 1.
- 13 But once -- it's not over. I mean, in
- 14 our order we establish that we're going to
- 15 continue with cost studies, and we are looking at
- 16 doing cost studies every three years. So this is
- 17 just the beginning, it's not the end, and these
- 18 are interim rates.
- 19 MS. LIEN: Can I follow up on something
- 20 more specific too? You had mentioned that, and I
- 21 did your order, you had mentioned that you found
- 22 that FCC, the Federal Communications

69 Communications dealings with voice biometrics to be problematic. Can you expand on that a little bit, please? MR. BAKER: Yes. In the FCC's proceeding they looked at Pay-Tel's cost for 5 inmate debit and for pre-paid collect cost, and they added two cents per minutes to it. That is for recovering continuous voice biometrics. only problem is, in most cases, there are no 10 continuous voice biometrics in confinement 11 facilities. 12 There is voice authentication where you 13 do a voice match of the inmate as they get on the phone to verify that it's them. The continuous 15 voice biometrics goes from that point through the rest of the call. In most cases that's not employed in most confinement facilities. 17 18 So if you have allowed for continuous 19 voice biometrics, and it's not being provided, 20 then I would conclude that some are being 21 overcharged. MR. GUDE: Talila, I'd like your 22

- 1 thoughts, further thoughts, on what changes you've
- 2 noticed since the Commissions rules have gone into
- 3 effect, and what more needs to be done with, as
- 4 you mentioned in your opening, within the
- 5 Commission's jurisdiction. What can the
- 6 Commission do? And what could the Commission do
- 7 that -- what worked and what didn't work, in terms
- 8 of on the interstate side, and as the Commission
- 9 looks at what further to do, what gaps have come
- 10 out, at least at this point.
- 11 MS. LEWIS: So to be clear, right now
- 12 deaf prisoners across the nation don't have access
- 13 to telecommunications. I mean there are a few
- 14 prisons where videophones have been installed. I
- 15 think the big change hasn't actually come from the
- 16 order necessarily, but from the increased dialogue
- 17 surrounding disability justice.
- 18 So many people, including some of the
- 19 folks in this room, who are presidents of
- 20 telephone companies, came to me saying, hey, I
- 21 thought what we had in our prison was sufficient;
- 22 tell me more.

71 1 So it's clear that people are interested. Departments of corrections have contacted me. But this shouldn't be something that me, the all-volunteer leader of a non-profit organization that is all volunteer should be providing. 7 This should be information that's provided by people in positions of power so we don't have to do this individual by individual, 10 you know, basis education. 11 What I see as -- that would beneficial coming from the FCC would be guidance about 12 disability. The FCC just established an all ASL 13 consumer complaint hotline. Clearly, the FCC 15 understands deafness, they understand disability, and it's easy enough for the FCC to then provide the information that it has in house in the next 17 18 order to people who are interested in making sure 19 that their services are accessible. 20 That's something that doesn't require any authority per say, but just requires someone 21 22 taking the time to move it from one order to the

72 1 next. That's what I want to see at least at 2 base, and there needs to be a strong emphasis from the FCC on providing updated telecommunications, which since we know that more than 75 percent of relay calls from videophones, why are there only video phones in six prisons across the nation? Why isn't the FCC and the Department of Justice 9 saying more on this topic? 10 I believe that actually making 11 information available to departments of corrections, to inmate calling services, and to 12 13 family members so we know how we could be advocating, and loved ones, and advocates, and 14 15 attorneys, that's actually what would be more 16 beneficial than saying nothing on the topic at 17 all. 18 MS. LEANZA: I wanted to endorse sort of that approach. I think particularly in Washington 19 20 when there's so many agencies with complex 21 jurisdiction, and obviously the FCC has certain amounts of jurisdiction, but it has other 22

- 1 limitations, but I think there's a huge service to
- 2 be made just in articulating those outlines.
- 3 Well, who does have jurisdiction? Who does that?
- 4 Who's the staff member that does it? Who could
- 5 have a meeting? Can you convene another meeting?
- 6 Can you convene a workshop? Can you convene a
- 7 workshop that brings in other governmental
- 8 agencies? Can you bring in leaders of state
- 9 prison associations to have -- I mean, I know
- 10 there's -- I think there's a panel later today
- 11 that maybe will touch on a little bit of this, but
- 12 I think there's a lot that you can do sort of from
- 13 a bully pulpit.
- 14 You know, it think Commissioner Clyburn
- 15 is a great leader, and it might be something she
- 16 or others would want to consider as just bringing
- 17 folks together, letting them know who to call,
- 18 letting them know what a best practice is.
- 19 So those don't require any authority
- 20 whatsoever, it just requires leadership and
- 21 information, and it's easy to undervalue when
- 22 you're inside a federal agency, the amount of

- 1 knowledge that you have about how things work, and
- 2 how easily you could probably, you know, open a
- 3 couple of doors at least to know who is the right
- 4 person to have in the room.
- 5 So you know, when somebody is an
- 6 advocate on the outside that can be extremely
- 7 opaque. So I think there's a huge value in just
- 8 getting the information out there. Then obviously
- 9 pushing as you can on your authority to remedy
- 10 this grave injustice, but there's a lot that can
- 11 be done just with a little person power.
- 12 MR. GUDE: Thank you. I think obviously
- 13 this workshop is part of our bully pulpit of
- 14 getting information out and trying to get broader
- 15 knowledge.
- 16 But it also helps us to understand what
- 17 these specific issues are as we delve into the
- 18 area further, the specifics don't always trickle
- 19 up to the Commission, so again, we thank you all
- 20 for coming in and sharing that with us.
- 21 Let me ask Paul a question. You had
- 22 mentioned in your opening statement that dropped

- 1 calls continue to be a problem, but the ICS
- 2 companies in many cases have told us that either
- 3 that's not a problem, or not a significant problem
- 4 going forward.
- 5 Maybe you can share your thoughts a
- 6 little bit more on what you're hearing on the
- 7 dropped call issue. It clearly is a problem when
- 8 it comes to the rate structure. But how is that
- 9 actually playing out in the real world?
- 10 MR. WRIGHT: The reports that we get
- 11 from prisoners around the country and their family
- 12 members, and people who are intact with prisoners,
- 13 and our organization also receives calls from
- 14 prisoners as well from around the country, is low
- 15 phone call quality continues to be an issue, and
- 16 also dropped calls.
- Ostensibly, the dropped calls are often
- 18 a result of so-called three-way call detection
- 19 systems. My understanding is that what a three-way
- 20 call detection system does is it detects other
- 21 noises. Often that other noise can be someone
- 22 coughing, clearing their throat, or just

- 1 background noise, which is very common in
- 2 detention facilities, and this leads to the calls
- 3 being dropped.
- 4 Then when the call is dropped the
- 5 prisoner has to call back again, which leads to
- 6 another hook up fee, and a larger charge, and I
- 7 think this is something that it artificially
- 8 inflates the costs of the calls above and beyond
- 9 the already high rates.
- 10 We're consistently getting reports
- 11 nationally about continued dropped calls.
- MR. GUDE: Has that changed at all in
- 13 your sense since the Commission's order went into
- 14 effect?
- MR. WRIGHT: No, we haven't seen any
- 16 change in that. This has been a constant thing
- 17 for at least the last ten years or so, and I think
- 18 it started with the implementation of the so-
- 19 called three-way call detection systems.
- 20 MS. LEWIS: Can I just add to that? I
- 21 would like to see that folks calling through
- 22 TTY's, the few TTY's that are actually functional

- 1 in our prisons actually have a worse situation
- 2 with respect to dropped calls. One, because calls
- 3 take exponentially longer when you're typing and
- 4 English is not your first language.
- 5 Two, because these limits that exist
- 6 anyway, there's a 15 minute cap on most calls,
- 7 really just for the deaf person who has to connect
- 8 to relay, that takes eight minutes in and of
- 9 itself, so the deaf person is left with six
- 10 minutes to get -- talk to their attorney, or their
- 11 loved one, and then they have to do the call all
- 12 over again, which clearly skyrockets very quickly.
- Deaf people are still being charged a
- 14 surcharge to use relay in prisons across the
- 15 nation. That hasn't changed since the last time I
- 16 was here either.
- 17 Yes, dropped calls, I experience dropped
- 18 calls with prisoners who call me all the time, but
- 19 it's often because the -- well, I won't get into
- 20 all the technicalities of how a TTY works, but you
- 21 all understand how TTY's work, and it's through
- 22 sound. It's like Morse code, so if there's any

- 1 sound in the prison, and we know that there's tons
- 2 of sound in a prison, the call is going to be
- 3 perceived as there's some third-party, or what
- 4 have you.
- 5 So it's certainly an issue that affects
- 6 us, and I think we actually pay lot more for it.
- 7 MR. WEISE: Yeah, I'd like to add to
- 8 Peter's comment if I could, as well as perhaps
- 9 implicate myself in the process.
- 10 You know, when I was in prison I had the
- 11 fortunate ability to have my father, who was
- 12 middle class -- you know, I quickly looked at the
- 13 phone rates and realized I was going to pay about
- 14 \$15 for 15 minutes, but a local call was a mere
- 15 \$2.
- 16 So I quickly ascertained, well, what I
- 17 need to do is get a local number. So I had my
- 18 father purchase a cell phone, get a local number,
- 19 I'd call that cell phone with the local number,
- 20 then I would have him forward the call to whoever
- 21 else I wanted to talk to. They would forward the
- 22 call, and then I could talk to anybody I wanted to

- 1 with -- for a mere \$2 for 15 minutes.
- For Peter's -- you know, with the three-
- 3 way calling system, that's what it's there to
- 4 detect, so that, you know, number one, for a
- 5 number of reasons. First, they want to be able to
- 6 monitor who you're calling and a three-way system
- 7 lets you call whoever you want, and secondly it's
- 8 the more local numbers you have the less money you
- 9 get on the backend.
- 10 So I just bring that up because I think
- 11 there are ways that people will figure out how to
- 12 make cheaper phone calls, and I think one of the
- 13 things you see in a prison system today is this
- 14 growing concern of cell phones being snuck into
- 15 prisons, and there's obviously security concerns
- 16 with cell phones in prisons, but I also think it's
- 17 a result of this exorbitant high cost that we have
- 18 of people wanting to communicate with their loved
- 19 ones.
- 20 You also see kind of this raising up of
- 21 corporations who will, in essence, you pay a
- 22 monthly fee, \$8 or whatever it is, and they will

- 1 give you a local number that then somebody can put
- 2 on their call list, and then you can make a local
- 3 call, as opposed to a long distance call.
- 4 So I think there are ways that people
- 5 are looking -- I like the balloon analogy that he
- 6 said, because I mean, people are going to find a
- 7 way. There's a little bit of a free market in
- 8 there somewhere, and people are going to try to
- 9 find how to make the cheapest phone call.
- I think there are -- what I've really
- 11 learned through this whole process in advocating
- 12 for this, is there are many ways to attack the
- 13 dragon. I think perhaps coming at even
- 14 departments of corrections and say perhaps you
- 15 offer the ability for families to secure a local
- 16 number. Perhaps that's one way that you can do
- 17 that.
- 18 So I just really -- yeah, the hang ups,
- 19 and all of that, is a continual problem in our
- 20 prisons.
- 21 MS. LIEN: Thank you, Jesse. Darrell,
- 22 how have you dealt with this in Alabama?

- 1 MR. BAKER: Just last week I was in the
- 2 Elmore County, Alabama, detention facility as we
- 3 spoke with inmates in ever cell block, and two a
- 4 man they said their number one problem is dropped
- 5 calls.
- 6 It's dropped calls due to suspected
- 7 three- way call violations. This is why that's
- 8 happening; the software that screens for suspected
- 9 three-way calls is searching for DTMF signals,
- 10 which is Dual Tone Multi Frequency, it's when you
- 11 key in a number on your touchpad on your telephone
- 12 you'll hear the various tones that are sending
- 13 that call to a third-party, or forwarding that
- 14 call.
- So you can adjust the sensitivity of the
- 16 software to, obviously block more calls, or knock
- 17 off more calls, and that's what's happening.
- 18 You're getting a lot of background noise and those
- 19 calls are being bumped off.
- 20 If you have rates that have a set up and
- 21 a per minute charges on top of it, what happens is
- 22 those inmates have to go through that calling

- 1 process again, and they get charged again.
- Now, with the postalized rates that the
- 3 FCC has recommended, and Alabama has recommended,
- 4 that's going to be less of a problem. There won't
- 5 be a need to refund, and the inmates if they are
- 6 knocked off can recall again and the charge will
- 7 not be a problem, except the single payment
- 8 services.
- 9 You've got to continue to monitor single
- 10 payment services because they're going through
- 11 that screening process too for three-way calling,
- 12 and if they're bumped off at some of those rates,
- 13 \$14.99 and \$9.99 for those calls, they'll have to
- 14 go back through and be charged those rates all
- 15 over again if they're bumped for three-way
- 16 calling. So we've got to look at that process.
- 17 MS. LEANZA: In considering that issue,
- 18 I wonder if the Commission couldn't -- I don't
- 19 know, for example, when the Commission did it's
- 20 last order there, and obviously that's still --
- 21 that's stayed at the moment, there's sort of a
- 22 presumption of when a rate is appropriate or not

- 1 appropriate, and then a process to prove whether
- 2 it is appropriate or not, I'm wondering if as the
- 3 Commission gathers more data on these incidents,
- 4 whether the type of call pricing, which
- 5 incentivizes problems like dropped calls, because
- 6 that increases the volume and increases the
- 7 revenue, could possibly be a flag, or something
- 8 that requires further justification.
- 9 Whereas if a prison or a jail had a rate
- 10 structure that was more likely to incentivize
- 11 appropriate use of the technology, and not abuse
- 12 of the technology to increase rates, that might be
- 13 a way to incorporate it into the FCC's framework
- 14 that it's used in that past that would -- you
- 15 know, it would help address this issue without
- 16 being so -- you know, without doing something
- 17 that's very specific, but that would at least be a
- 18 step in the right direction.
- 19 MS. LIEN: Karina, we haven't heard from
- 20 you in a while. I have two different questions
- 21 for you. One is, could you please discuss the
- 22 petition filed at the New Jersey of Public

- 1 Utilities and what prompted that petition, which I
- 2 know you touched on briefly, but if you could
- 3 expand a little bit?
- 4 We also have question from outside,
- 5 which said you mentioned several examples of
- 6 counties accessing high commission on local prison
- 7 calls; how much do high commissions contribute to
- 8 the overall problem of high ICS rates?
- 9 MS. WILKINSON: Well, we've seen -- I'll
- 10 answer the second one first -- we've seen the
- 11 state reduce their rate from a flat rate of \$.33
- 12 to \$.17, while eliminating the commission. So the
- 13 rates can still be above a fair and just rate,
- 14 even without a commission.
- 15 I'm not sure what the state's motivation
- 16 is for that, so I think we still have advocacy
- 17 that we can do around bringing those rates down
- 18 further. If our petitioner were -- the regulation
- 19 that we're asking for from the Board of Public
- 20 Unities were to bring the rates down, we see just
- 21 across the river in New York 4.8 cents per minute.
- 22 So what is New Jersey's interest in keeping the

- rates so high? 2 In terms of what motivated us, so in working with immigrant detainees, it's a constant complaint of the high rates. There have been petitions when they close down a facility, ICE closed down a facility in New York City, they 7 moved people into the Hudson County Jail, and the rates in New York were 10 cents a minute, and they 9 came over to Hudson County, 88 detainees wrote a 10 petition, which they submitted to the New York 11 Times, the American Bar Association, and number -one of the top complaints was the phone rates. 12 13 They were able to make some kind of change in that, but we know of people who are 15 detained and their children have to choose between
 - 16 calling their mother and eating. We know that
 - 17 people come out of immigration detention with
 - 18 thousand dollar phone bills.
 - 19 I just wanted to commend the folks in
 - 20 Alabama because even before the FCC order we had
 - 21 one immigrant detainee who was in detention for
 - 22 three and a half years, in about four different

- 1 county jails, in New Jersey. Not the county where
- 2 he was originally from. So and part of the time
- 3 he was also detained in Alabama.
- 4 So when he didn't have a court
- 5 appearance ICE moved him down to Alabama, it was
- 6 cheaper for him to call his sister from Alabama
- 7 than from one county to another in New Jersey.
- 8 So these are the kinds of things that
- 9 motivated us to -- also, like I said, to file a
- 10 petition with the Board of Public Utilities. Also
- 11 the fact that we didn't think the legislative
- 12 route was going to achieve what they were able to
- 13 achieve in both other states, such as California,
- 14 and New York.
- MS. LIEN: So am I understanding
- 16 correctly that in New Jersey there is no
- 17 prohibition on commissions; this is being decided
- 18 on a county by county basis, is that correct?
- MS. WILKINSON: Yeah, there's no
- 20 prohibition.
- 21 MR. GUDE: I had a question for Paul.
- 22 I know that HRDC keeps a great database

- 1 of ICS contracts that are out there. Have you all
- 2 seen since the Commission's order went into effect
- 3 any changes in what you're seeing, in terms of the
- 4 RFP's that you may have access to, or the
- 5 contracts that come out, getting back to Darrell's
- 6 comment about the balloon. Has there been a
- 7 noticeable balloon effect in contracts trying to
- 8 find cost, or abilities to make up revenue losses
- 9 in one place, versus another?
- 10 Or do you see really the, at least on
- 11 the interstate side, rates coming down and having
- 12 a real benefit, and is that benefit also from the
- 13 bully pulpit perspective impacting intrastate
- 14 rates in any positive way?
- 15 MR. WRIGHT: So far I think it's one of
- 16 those things that it's too soon to tell. We
- 17 maintain the website at
- 18 www.PrisonPhoneJustice.org, and we have the
- 19 contracts for all 50 states, the Bureau of
- 20 Prisons, and a number of county jails around the
- 21 country.
- 22 Part of the problem with this is there's

- 1 a couple of problems in getting a quick answer to
- 2 your question, and number one is the lack of
- 3 transparency involved in getting this data. We
- 4 have at least one full time person at HRDC that
- 5 they're only job is to track down these contracts
- 6 and get the data on them. To say that's -- it's
- 7 quite the task is an understatement.
- 8 Some departments of correction are very
- 9 forthcoming with them, but unfortunately those are
- 10 the minority.
- 11 The other problem that we've got also is
- 12 that these contracts are multi-year contracts.
- 13 It's very common to see these contracts that are
- 14 five, six, seven eight years for the provision of
- 15 services with one-year extension options, so you
- 16 don't see a lot of renegotiation.
- I think this also goes to -- is more of
- 18 a comment too about the lack of competition and
- 19 market consolidation within the ICS market, which
- 20 I think for practical purposes isn't really a
- 21 market. So we haven't really seen any type of
- 22 changes in the RFP's, and because these contracts

- 1 are such long-term contracts, we're probably not
- 2 going to see any changes in the RFP's for some
- 3 time to come.
- 4 We're still gathering the data and we'll
- 5 be reporting on that after we gather it, and we're
- 6 probably looking at probably another six to eight
- 7 months to be able to do that.
- 8 One of the ironic trends that we are
- 9 seeing, and that we're hearing from a lot of
- 10 prisoners and their families, is that because of
- 11 the FCC action out of state calls are now cheaper
- 12 than in state and local calls.
- So what we're seeing is people are
- 14 setting up -- family members are setting up
- 15 numbers out of state so the prisons can call the
- 16 out of state number, which then gets forwarded to
- 17 the family member, and it's cheaper than the in-
- 18 state calls, which I think it's kind of a sad
- 19 commentary, but I think it also reflects the need
- 20 for uniformly low rates, and affordable and
- 21 reasonable rates across the board so that everyone
- 22 can take advantage of the FCC's reform on this

90 1 effort. 2 MS. LIEN: Darrell, you mentioned in your opening comments the potential need, or the need for a transition period in Alabama. Can you expand on that a little bit please, as far as contract changes? 7 MR. BAKER: Yeah. Whether you agree or disagree with site commissions, they are in fact 9 there. I think in some cases there are local 10 budgets that depend on them. Local confinement 11 facility budgets. 12 Policy makers have to have an 13 opportunity to adjust going forward if you're going to do something with site commissions. 15 it's nice to say we need to eliminate site commissions, but you've got to consider those 17 policy makers, because like I say, you can create 18 a funding crisis at local jails, county jails, 19 city jails, if you don't accommodate for the 20 change, transition the change. 21 MR. GUDE: Let me follow up on that in two ways. One, how big a percent of revenue for a 22

- 1 jail or prison is the commission they receive? In
- 2 other words, is it a tiny amount that really a
- 3 transition is not really necessary, or is it a
- 4 very large amount that a transition is almost
- 5 critical, one.
- 6 Second, from a transition period, what's
- 7 an appropriate transition period? We have heard
- 8 all kinds of commentary from let the contract run
- 9 though, and don't tinker with the contract itself,
- 10 and in some cases that contract may go out many,
- 11 many years with option years, and all of that,
- 12 versus no transition period at all.
- 13 So from your perspective being closer to
- 14 the localities, what's your thoughts on that?
- 15 MR. BAKER: As far as the commissions
- 16 go, it depends on the facility, and it depends on
- 17 the provider.
- I will say that in Alabama we have
- 19 commissions as high as 84 percent.
- 20 MR. GUDE: But the percentage of
- 21 commission is very high, but as a percentage of
- 22 the budget for the facility itself. Obviously, if

- 1 it's less than a percent, one would believe that
- 2 budget makers can accommodate for that rather
- 3 quickly. If it's a large percentage it may be
- 4 more problematic.
- 5 MR. BAKER: To be honest in your
- 6 question, I haven't gone through and analyzed
- 7 those budgets. I presume that it's a lot higher
- 8 than one percent.
- 9 What was the second part of your
- 10 question?
- 11 MR. GUDE: On the transition. The
- 12 length of the transition that you find necessary,
- 13 or that you all looked at and thought through your
- 14 process, this is required, or useful.
- MR. BAKER: It depends on when you
- 16 implement the change. I mean if we're looking at,
- 17 in Alabama, starting on October 1, obviously the
- 18 FY-15 budget has already been approved. So going
- 19 forward we looked at a transition transitioning
- 20 down over two years and implementing the final
- 21 rates in three years.
- MS. LIEN: Getting back to Karina, I

- 1 have a follow up question, and this is for Karina
- 2 and for everyone; several of you have mentioned
- 3 this.
- 4 Your advocacy principally focused on
- 5 immigrant detainees, which means that some portion
- 6 of your calls must be international. How much of
- 7 an issue are international ICS rates?
- 8 MS. WILKINSON: It's been hard to get
- 9 the data on the international rates, so as Paul
- 10 was talking about, what's easily available is the
- 11 domestic rates. For some of the facilities we
- 12 know that, for example, Bergen County I believe is
- 13 around \$20 for 15 minutes international. It's
- 14 really -- it's an issue.
- 15 The immigrant detainees, if you -- if
- 16 you're facing deportation sometimes you need in
- 17 your -- to prepare your court case you need to get
- 18 documents from another country. If you have a
- 19 final order against you, you may need to prepare
- 20 to go back to a country where you haven't been in
- 21 a while.
- 22 So these calls are critical and I don't

- 1 have good data on all 21 counties, or even the
- 2 state doesn't make available on their website what
- 3 their international rates are.
- 4 MS. LIEN: Is access to international
- 5 calls an issue, or is the -- is it more of an
- 6 issue of high rates?
- 7 MS. WILKINSON: I'm not aware of those
- 8 issues, so I'm sorry.
- 9 MS. LEWIS: Can I just say something? I
- 10 would just like to add; you asked what would be
- 11 helpful in terms of what the Commission could do.
- 12 I would like to see in the next order
- 13 also a mandate that all ICS providers have a
- 14 disability access plan in place within their,
- 15 whatever it is that they submit to you all. I
- 16 don't think that's asking too much, particularly
- 17 because they are making so much money and it's
- 18 really easy to do.
- 19 MR. GUDE: We have a question from the
- 20 audience for Darrell. The BLM Commission
- 21 regularly visits or inspects telephone systems and
- 22 jails, do you see that the jails have a cost to

- 1 offer inmate phone services that can be offset by
- 2 minimal commissions, transporting inmates,
- 3 listening to calls, disciplinary actions from call
- 4 abuse, etcetera.
- In other words, what are the costs for
- 6 facilities to make ICS available inside those
- 7 facilities, that properly, one could argue, is
- 8 recovered or should be recovered through ICS
- 9 rates?
- MR. BAKER: Well, that's something that
- 11 we're looking at, and Alabama tends to work with
- 12 the sheriff's and local confinement facility
- 13 administrators in our state to do a time and
- 14 motion study to determine what is involved, what
- 15 is their involvement in Inmate Calling Service?
- 16 I know that one of the requirements is
- 17 they have to monitor the calls, or a portion of
- 18 the calls. They're also involved in actually
- 19 submitting trouble tickets on equipment, they're
- 20 involved in some billing disputes the inmates may
- 21 have with the provider. So there is a level of
- 22 involvement. We don't know how much that is right

- 1 now, so that's something we're going to determine
- 2 going forward.
- MR. GUDE: Your sense from, as you said,
- 4 you've made trips to facilities throughout the
- 5 state, how does that vary? Not just that, but the
- 6 whole issue of jails versus prisons, small versus
- 7 large, you noted that there are differences. Can
- 8 you talk a little bit more about the cost
- 9 differences from that perspective, the -- how
- 10 tiering from a cost recovery perspective, or a
- 11 rate perspective, may or may not be useful or
- 12 necessary?
- 13 We have heard arguments on all sides of
- 14 that; that tiering is useful, the breakdown should
- 15 be on call volume, or on some other basis. But
- 16 your thoughts and identification would be useful
- 17 on that.
- 18 MR. BAKER: We don't know, that's why
- 19 we're looking at it going forward. We're going to
- 20 look at the cost studies on a tiered basis for
- 21 jails. But you've got to know that there's going
- 22 to be smaller volumes at smaller jails, and so you

97 have a lot of the same fixed cost for those jails as you would for the medium size jails with a lower volume. 3 So you know there's going to be higher cost. So we're going to try to look at that going forward. 7 I will mention something that Bill Pope included in comments to the FCC about universal service fund; he said that the Commission ought to consider eliminated universal service fund charges 10 11 to inmates. What the Commission could also consider 12 is taking that universal service fund that comes 13 from inmate calling and putting in a special pot 15 and compensating the higher cost jails, to keep 16 the rates low in those jails. 17 MS. LEANZA: I just wanted to mention 18 really quickly, the United Church of Christ is the 19 long standing, along with our civil rights allies, 20 on the universal service fund, and particular the 21 lifeline fund. You know, clearly when people are 22 low income and they get a benefit for that fund, I

- 1 think that's important.
- 2 I just would be a little cautious about
- 3 what is this revenue going to be used for? Is it
- 4 used to compensate the jail, or is it used to
- 5 benefit -- I mean, I wouldn't want the subsidy
- 6 from an inappropriately high rate to then drain
- 7 money out of the universal service fund, which is
- 8 used to help low income consumers have a basic
- 9 lifeline connection, so that a jail could maintain
- 10 it's commission level and support it's facility on
- 11 non-telecom related issues. I think that would be
- 12 -- you know, really cautious.
- I did also want to highlight in regard
- $14\,$ to this conversation that I wonder, and I don't
- 15 have the data, but I think it would be a useful
- 16 enterprise to incorporate is, you know, what's the
- 17 role of new technologies to do some of this
- 18 monitoring?
- 19 I mean, my understanding from being in
- 20 this proceeding is that new technologies are
- 21 actually making -- you know, driving down costs
- 22 for monitoring, and all those things, because

- 1 they're often done on an automated basis, they're
- 2 often done in a centralized remote location. So
- 3 in fact, there may not be that same cost
- 4 differential for a small jail as a large facility,
- 5 because in fact the provider is centralizing those
- 6 services at a single place so their volume is
- 7 distributed over the whole facility, which think
- 8 is one of the things that the Commission
- 9 acknowledged when it -- you know, the last order.
- 10 So keeping that on the front burner in terms of
- 11 cost.
- 12 MR. GUDE: One last question -- I think
- 13 we're running out of time -- for Paul, you
- 14 mentioned that some states do not accept
- 15 commissions. Though your databases and analysis,
- 16 have you seen a direct correlation between that
- 17 and lower ICS rates?
- 18 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, there's a very direct
- 19 correlation. The December issue of 2013 of Prison
- 20 Legal News, we did a -- every two years we're
- 21 doing a comprehensive survey of the states, and
- 22 for example, New York State, which did away with

100 its commissions a few years ago, the cost of a call in-state and out of state is 4.8 cents a 3 minute. The service there is provided by Global Tel Link, and there's a direct correlation between the cost of the calls and the amount of the commission, and I think that one of the things that we're seeing in this proceeding, is we're seeing two things. We're seeing a lack of data 10 and transparency from the telecom industry, and 11 from the government agencies that contract with 12 them. 13 The fact that Prison Legal News is a non- profit is the organization having to gather 15 these contracts and make them available in one place, which no one had done before we did, I think is one of the things that makes it difficult 18 to have informed policy decisions if you don't 19 even have the data. 20 The telecom industry is not coming 21 forward with any information about their actual

costs in providing these services, including the

- 1 security measures. We know the security measures
- 2 have been touted as one of the reasons for the
- 3 high cost of calls, yet again, I think that is
- 4 also a red herring because the technology exists
- 5 for call monitoring, call recording, all that
- 6 other stuff.
- 7 Whenever we do phone calls to corporate
- 8 calling centers and we get the message your call
- 9 is being recorded and may be monitored, it's the
- 10 same technology that's being used there. So the
- 11 costs there are being inflated.
- 12 But I think that the bigger flaw in --
- 13 that we're seeing is the whole structure of the
- 14 ICS system where the contracts are being bid on
- 15 who's going to get the biggest kickback or
- 16 commission, they're not being bid on who's going
- 17 to provide the lower service to -- the best
- 18 service at the lowest cost to the consumer, which
- 19 is ideally how these contracts should be bid.
- 20 When we look at the states like New
- 21 York, New Mexico, California, where the calls are
- 22 being -- where the contracts are being bid without

- 1 the commissions, we see the costs are
- 2 significantly lower. The commissions are what's
- 3 driving the cost of the calls.
- 4 MS. LEANZA: I know the Commission's got
- 5 a data collection and data requirement that's
- 6 supposed to be submitted, I believe next week, and
- 7 I think there's some question about whether
- 8 providers feel prepared to submit the data, and I
- 9 would just like to go on record and hope that that
- 10 deadline is not extended. You know, the data is a
- 11 critical component, it's been the excuse for all
- 12 this time, it's been a reason why supposedly the
- 13 Commission couldn't act for a long, it's
- 14 supposedly the basis for why we're having a
- 15 lawsuit over the basic -- the rates that were
- 16 adopted last year.
- 17 So then for the same people who are
- 18 controlling the data to then say, oh no, we're not
- 19 ready since you told us last August, almost a year
- 20 ago, that we're supposed to get data, that now we
- 21 need more time to submit data, you know, we've
- 22 seen this shell game of waiting, and waiting, and

- 1 waiting for more information, and I don't think
- 2 that there's any appropriateness for there to be a
- 3 further delay.
- 4 They've been on notice for an extremely
- 5 long time that this data is required, and I can
- 6 only speculate as to why at this time, all of a
- 7 sudden, the data is once again not going to be
- 8 available. This data needs to be collected, and
- 9 needs to be collected on the deadline the FCC set,
- 10 and I strongly encourage decision makers here to
- 11 press ahead with that, and make sure that that
- 12 data is collected, and that companies that do not
- 13 comply with FCC's rule about data collections are
- 14 appropriately sanction or fined, or whatever is
- 15 set forth, because that data needs to be
- 16 collected. It's essential; we can't make policy
- 17 in a vacuum.
- 18 MS. LEWIS: Can I just add one thing to
- 19 that? I believe that all data that should be
- 20 collected should always have questions regarding
- 21 disability. Right now the large vacuum that
- 22 Paul's referring to with respect to contracts,

104 same exits with where are people with disabilities 2 in the system. So we know that there are 50 million 3 people with disabilities with nation, but we have no idea how many people with disabilities are in prison systems, so it would be really important to collect that information so we can -- by we I mean the FCC and the Department of Justice -- can 9 actually take meaningful steps in the right 10 direction toward making sure that folks, wherever 11 they may be in these systems, jails and prisons, are receiving access, but if you don't collect the 12 13 data then you won't ever be able to do it. 14 MR. GUDE: All right. Thank you very 15 much. This brings to an end our first panel. 16 Obviously, as you can tell, interesting issues, a 17 lot of issues that are out there. 18 Thank you so much panelists for joining 19 us. This really helps frame our understanding and 20 improve our understanding of the issues. Thank 21 you. 22 (Applause)

105 1 COMMISSIONER CLYBURN: Today I have a pleasure of both thanking all of you, particularly Mr. Gude and Ms. Lien, for a very dynamic last panel but also to introduce one of our nation's best treasures, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Now in her twelfth term as a 7 representative for the District of Columbia, the Congresswoman is a ranking member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on 10 Highways and Transit. In addition to her service 11 on the Transportation Committee, she is a member of the Committee on Oversight and Government 12 13 Reform. Before her congressional service, she was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to chair the 15 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 16 making her the first woman to do so. When she 17 came to congress, she was already a national 18 figure, a noted civil rights leader, a feminist, a 19 tenured professor and a board member of three 20 Fortune 500 companies. 21 If you ask those who know her best what 22 her major fault is, they will say that she will

106 never let go of a cause or an effort until the job is done. The Congresswoman's work for full congressional voting representation and democracy for the people of the District of Columbia continues. Her accomplishment in breaking down barriers for those in her District are matched by her success in bringing home unique economic opportunities for her constituents, and her 9 support for reforms for those with few or no 10 advocates like the constituency at the center of 11 this workshop will never ever wane. 12 So ladies and gentlemen, it is a 13 pleasure for me to present a support, a friend, an American treasure, trailblazer, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes- Norton of the District of 15 Columbia. 16 17 (Applause.) 18 CONGRESSWOMAN HOLMES-NORTON: First, let me thank Commissioner Clyburn for those really 19 20 quite wonderfully gracious remarks. I mean you 21 would think that I deserve some credit for what 22 this Commission and what Commissioner Clyburn

- 1 herself did when she was Acting Chair of this
- 2 Commission. I understand that Chairman Tom
- 3 Wheeler is here. There may be other members of
- 4 the Commission here. All praise to you and that's
- 5 why I've come for what I think is really quite
- 6 extraordinary. You have to understand I come from
- 7 the "Do Nothing House of Representatives" so when
- 8 I'm invited to a session like this where
- 9 essentially what we've seen as a Commission that
- 10 not only got it done under Commissioner Clyburn
- 11 but then some and the then some, of course, has to
- 12 do with the follow-up right afterwards and with
- 13 this series of workshops today.
- 14 I want to thank the moderators. I want
- 15 to thank the Commissioners. We were so glad to
- 16 have it done candidly that we dared not think of
- 17 the afterwards. We didn't even contemplate
- 18 something as wonderfully professional as this
- 19 follow through panel is today. And I want to say
- 20 to those of you who have come to Washington, some
- 21 of you may not be from this area, that you have
- 22 done some very important work; you are doing some

- 1 very important work here today. It's one thing to
- 2 -- it's a very difficult thing for the Commission
- 3 to proffer regulations. For the most part, you
- 4 don't hear from such a Commission again. It
- 5 usually takes far longer to do the actual
- 6 regulations than it took Commissioner Clyburn and
- 7 the Commission to do these regulations. It had
- 8 taken some time and I want to say just how
- 9 appreciative we are of what the Commission did and
- 10 what you are doing here today.
- To make you understand that, you should
- 12 think of the FCC and the issues that are on its
- 13 plate all the time. They are trendy, technical
- 14 issues. I'm not always sure they have a face.
- 15 This one had a real face. And when Commission
- 16 Clyburn became the Acting Chair, it had a real
- 17 leader, a real leader who has made a difference to
- 18 hundreds of thousands of people who are
- 19 incarcerated and millions of their relatives. I
- 20 exaggerate none at all when I say how important
- 21 the regulation of these prison phone rates means
- 22 both to those directly involved and to the country

- 1 because of what it means when they get back home,
- 2 and according to all of the data we have, indicate
- 3 that the kinds of communication and contact you
- 4 are enabling them to have has everything to do
- 5 with their reintegration into the society.
- 6 I happen to chair the working group of
- 7 the Congressional Black Caucus who took special
- 8 interest in the Commission's work because 60
- 9 percent of those who are incarcerated in our
- 10 country today are people of color. That's the way
- 11 it's always been whether they are immigrants or
- 12 poor people, the people who are in the jails and
- 13 the prisons, I mean it's the people at the bottom
- 14 of the society.
- Now this is America. Those people come
- 16 out and we try to not keep them at the bottom of
- 17 the society and we try to see what we should do to
- 18 make sure when they do come out, they are really
- 19 part of us. It's very hard to figure out.
- 20 And to tell you the truth, we have not
- 21 figured it out except for one approach. We do not
- 22 have the key to reducing recidivism but we do know

- 1 this. We have documented that of all the
- 2 approaches, the many approaches that are used to
- 3 reduced recidivism, the one that we can document
- 4 has the greatest effect is stimulating
- 5 communication from behind those bars with people
- 6 in the greater society who will support them and
- 7 who love them. It is the one vehicle we know of
- 8 that makes a difference to the successful
- 9 reintegration into society and makes a difference
- 10 into a safe -- and to public safety itself.
- 11 So we were particularly moved by this
- 12 issue because the absence of reasonable phone
- 13 rates fell most heavily on those who could least
- 14 afford it, those, of course, were in prison but
- 15 their families as well. We and the Congressional
- 16 Black Caucus want to once again thank the
- 17 Commission. We were not sure that the Commission
- 18 would regulate both intrastate and interstate and
- 19 make calls and when it decided to do so, we were
- 20 overjoyed because most prisoners would have been
- 21 left out if both kinds of calls were not
- 22 regulated. It was clear to us and we cited what

111 we believed was definitive statutory authorization for the Commission doing what it did. 3 I can tell you this, that the families are, to this very day, very grateful. The face that this issue had on it happened to be a face from the District of Columbia because the lead 7 plaintiff was a grandmother and her grandson. when the petition was filed before the Commission, members of congress had a press conference and we brought that grandmother and her grandson -- her 10 11 grandson is now employed here in construction, one 12 of our biggest construction companies -- and we 13 let them speak for themselves. This grandmother had led the fight both in the courts and in the 15 Commission for 10 years. She had no criticism to She had only gratitude to offer and a plea 17 to make that somehow the others like her, because 18 after all, her grandson was there to speak for 19 himself, could have the opportunity to speak to 20 their loved ones and to have what the rest of us 21 take for granted. 22 So I've just come this afternoon to say

- 1 we don't take for granted what you're doing here
 2 at all. We are overjoyed by the fact that the
- 3 Commission has sponsored these panels and by the
- 4 kinds of issues you're looking at, the impact of
- 5 the reform, and the need for additional reform.
- 6 Do you know how unusual it is to hear a regulatory
- 7 agency talk about additional reform? They're so
- 8 glad to get out of the regulations, to keep
- 9 Congress from pounding on them that they just
- 10 don't want to hear anything more. We didn't have
- 11 to do a thing after we submitted our petition. We
- 12 are so grateful for how rapidly it got done. We
- 13 could not be more grateful for this follow
- 14 through. We're especially grateful to those of
- 15 you who've come to participate in this follow
- 16 through and perfect what the Commission has so
- 17 wonderfully done. For those involved and the
- 18 United States of America, thank you very much.
- 19 (Applause.)
- 20 COMMISSIONER CLYBURN: Congresswoman,
- 21 thank you so very much. You mentioned during the
- 22 introduction that you were not sure why we were --

113 so I came to say generous -- but appropriate with our comments. I have a source in Congress and my source in Congress said to me during one of their critical meetings that a certain gentlewoman got up during the meeting and said -- talked about this effort and talked about our commitment to 7 getting things done and asked and charged and challenged all of them to help, this then Acting 9 Chair and this Commissioner in his effort, so for 10 that and so much more, I am grateful. We thank 11 you. The American people thank you and that is why I was so appropriate in my complements and 12 13 comments about you. So Roger, I know it's time for the next 14 15 panel and we are maybe one-and-a-half minutes late 16 and that's great in terms of FCC time. So thank 17 you so very much. I appreciate it. 18 (Applause.) 19 MEMBER GOLDBLATT: Will panel two please It was well worth the minute-and-a-half 20 come up. 21 by the way.

MODERATOR ZESIGER: Good morning.

I'd

- 1 like to welcome panel two to the table this
- 2 morning to begin a second set of issues focusing
- 3 primarily on ancillary charges their prevalence,
- 4 their costs, the rates being charged for them, the
- 5 occurrence of new charges, recommendations for
- 6 reform which have been made generally in the
- 7 docket, and to generally get the opinions, the
- 8 reactions of our panelists on ancillary charges.
- 9 As we heard earlier, they have become a more
- 10 significant part of the charges that ICS consumers
- 11 pay for their service overall; hence the focus of
- 12 this panel.
- 13 I'd like to begin by introducing our
- 14 panelists. Mr. Darrell Baker already introduced
- 15 from the Alabama PCS; Ms. Aleks Kajstura, the
- 16 Legal Director from the Prison Policy Initiative,
- 17 a group that's been very active on this issue in
- 18 particular; Lee Petro, counsel from Drinker,
- 19 Biddle and Reath and lead counsel for the Wright
- 20 petitioners, been involved in this issue for a
- 21 long period of time as many of you have, most of
- 22 you have; Mr. William Pope, President of Network

- 1 Communications International Corporation or NCIC,
- 2 an ICS provider based on Longview, Texas; and
- 3 finally, Mr. Vincent Townsend, President of Pay-
- 4 Tel Communications, an ICS provider based in North
- 5 Carolina.
- 6 Thank you, and Mr. Baker, if you would
- 7 begin.
- 8 MR. BAKER: I thank the FCC for the
- 9 opportunity to participate in this workshop and
- 10 for consideration of my comments. The three
- 11 drivers of ICS revenues are ICS rates, ancillary
- 12 chargers, otherwise known as fees, and charges for
- 13 single- payment services. A fourth is video
- 14 visitation and it's growing rapidly. Site
- 15 commissions do not apply to customer fees and very
- 16 minimal commissions are offered on single-payment
- 17 services.
- 18 Before proceeding, I'd like to make this
- 19 point. Some ICS providers charge reasonable fees
- 20 and if they offer single-payment services, the
- 21 charges are very reasonable by comparison. Their
- 22 attractiveness is excellent customer service and

- 1 square dealing with confinement facilities.
- 2 Unfortunately, being an honest broker is simply
- 3 not enough. They compete for exclusive
- 4 confinement facility contracts with a few ICS
- 5 providers who offer high site commissions using
- 6 exce3ssive fees and exorbitant charges for single-
- 7 payment services to compensate for reduced calling
- 8 income need to pay commissions and win the
- 9 contract. These providers win contracts because
- 10 the end-users of the service aren't the ones
- 11 making the choice for their service provider.
- 12 Alabama capped ICS rates in 2009.
- 13 Therefore, all providers are subject to the same
- 14 maximum rates. Since then, site commissions
- 15 skyrocketed to as high as 84 percent in our state.
- 16 Common sense alone will tell you that providers
- 17 cannot survive on 16 percent of the ICS revenue.
- 18 Those that awarded the contracts should have
- 19 figured that out as well.
- 20 So how do these providers do it? The
- 21 answer is excessive end-user fees supported by
- 22 exorbitant for single-payment services. So how do

- 1 you reform end- user fees? Alabama's approach is
- 2 first, establish a basic level of ICS service and
- 3 what is included in that basic service at no
- 4 additional charge to the customer. If service is
- 5 not defined, then anything may be considered
- 6 ancillary by the provider.
- We define basic service as prepaid,
- 8 collect and inmate debit service wherein the
- 9 customer is entitled to establish an account with
- 10 a provider and have it maintained at no charge and
- 11 to have a means of funding that account at no
- 12 charge. Other telecommunication carriers in
- 13 Alabama a required to provide their customers a
- 14 monthly statement at no charge. ICS providers,
- 15 therefore, have the same requirement for all the
- 16 inmate debit service. Additionally, those
- 17 customers are entitled to a refund of their
- 18 prepaid charges at no cost to them.
- 19 Beyond that basic level, the Commission
- 20 will consider fees. So what is ancillary beyond
- 21 that basic level of service? Payments by a credit
- 22 card or a third-party payment transfer service,

- 1 bill processing for sync collect charges wherein
- 2 the provider must pay to include their charges on
- 3 another carrier's billing statement, charges for
- 4 transferring funds from canteen trust funds to
- 5 inmate calling accounts, and a small charge when
- 6 the customer chooses an optional paper bill over
- 7 the default electronic account statement.
- 8 What fees are not authorized?
- 9 Essentially, the remaining plethora of provider
- 10 fees. Alabama has never authorized an in trust
- 11 state regulatory recovery fee. When providers
- 12 seek their certificate of convenience and
- 13 necessity authorizing them to provide service in
- 14 Alabama, they are aware that the service is
- 15 regulated requiring oversight and reporting. They
- 16 know about the requirement for paying the
- 17 Commission inspection and supervision fees as well
- 18 as the requirement for collecting and remitting
- 19 applicable taxes and government fees. Why then do
- 20 some regulators feel obligated to compensate
- 21 providers for things they've already agreed to do?
- 22 With all due respect to our host,

- 1 Alabama objects to the application of a federal
- 2 regulatory recovery fee and any U.S. self-
- 3 collection admin fee. Can anyone point me to an
- 4 FCC order that specifies what those fees are?
- 5 Providers are charging whatever they want. To
- 6 their credit, some of the ICS providers do not
- 7 apply these fees. The USF fee is calculated
- 8 quarterly with precision that would make a
- 9 watchmaker green with envy. The telephone relay
- 10 system is accurate to fractions of a cent but
- 11 providers are allowed to charge whatever they
- 12 please under the category of a regulatory recover
- 13 fee.
- One provider is assessing a 99 cent
- 15 charge to the first and fifth interstate call.
- 16 Another charges 3.49 if one just interstate call
- 17 is made by an inmate. Assume an inmate makes one
- 18 10-minute interstate call at the FCC's new interim
- 19 rates. The charge is \$2.10 but one provider
- 20 currently tacks on \$3.49 for regulatory recovery,
- 21 so that \$2.10 call just cost the customer \$5.59.
- 22 Additionally, that customer is assessed

- 1 disproportionately a higher proportion of
- 2 regulatory costs than a caller who makes more
- 3 interstate calls.
- 4 Alabama's position is that we will allow
- 5 this fee if the provider can point to an FCC rule
- 6 or order that specifically authorizes it and the
- 7 amount thereof.
- 8 Third-party payment transfer fees. Some
- 9 providers will attempt to persuade you that they
- 10 have no control over what their customers are
- 11 charged by third-party payment transfer services.
- 12 That claim is blatantly false. They exercise
- 13 tremendous control over the charge. Why do one
- 14 provider's customers pay \$5.00 and another
- 15 provider's customer's pay 11.95 to the same third-
- 16 party transfer service? We suspect revenue
- 17 sharing arrangements exist between some providers
- 18 and third party payment transfer services.
- 19 Essentially, the customer is being charged twice
- 20 for the privilege of sending their money to the
- 21 provider. ICS providers have no incentive to seek
- 22 lower payment transfer fees for their customers.

- 1 In fact, they are free to sock it to them if they
- 2 choose and some do.
- 3 I'll close with this recommendation to
- 4 the FCC. The myriad of end-user fees are
- 5 confusing to customers. It does little good to
- 6 boast about setting low rates. What comes out of
- 7 the customer's pocket is what matters and fees are
- 8 emptying those pockets. You're in the process of
- 9 studying costs for semi- permanent interstate ICS
- 10 rates. We're following the same path in Alabama.
- 11 As much as possible, incorporate all known
- 12 measurable and justifiable provider costs and the
- 13 ICS rates excluding the truly elective ones for
- 14 the customer that I've mentioned previously.
- 15 Include reasonable costs for provider compliance
- 16 with federal regulations. Together let's
- 17 eliminate all ancillary charges except those that
- 18 make sense. Make the rates a true reflection of
- 19 cost for providing the service rather than an
- 20 illusion.
- 21 When you have done so and addressed
- 22 single- payment services as well, all ICS

- 1 providers will be on a more level playing field in
- 2 terms of competing with one another. They will no
- 3 longer be able to underwrite promises of higher
- 4 site commission payments with the old standbys.
- 5 Thank you.
- 6 MS. KAJSTURA: Thank you again for
- 7 having us here on this panel and what's become now
- 8 an annual tradition. I'm Aleks Kajstura, the
- 9 Legal Director at the Prison Policy Initiative
- 10 where we've released two reports on the cost of
- 11 the calls to and from prison. And one of the
- 12 reports that deals specifically on fees was over
- 13 1200 pages long, so I'm going to attempt to kind
- 14 of consolidate it now here for you.
- 15 As most of you know, the high cost of
- 16 phone calls can be traced back to the practice of
- 17 paying commissions to the jails and prison phone
- 18 systems and ancillary fees are no exception.
- 19 Today's high ancillary fees are a direct outgrowth
- 20 of the commission system. Because correctional
- 21 facilities are taking so much of the revenue
- 22 generated through phone rates, companies have

- 1 developed fees as a way to shield that profit from
- 2 the commission system, and they've become a robust
- 3 and hidden revenue stream. As a result, we found
- 4 that ancillary charges now make up about 38
- 5 percent of the money spent on phone calls. So
- 6 regulating ancillary fees is a significant and
- 7 important part of regulating the cost of the phone
- 8 services in correctional facilities.
- 9 To the point where -- there can really
- 10 be no meaningful regulation of phone costs without
- 11 controlling for fees because, you know, the ICS
- 12 companies have proven to be adept at charging fees
- 13 in order to bypass any burdens placed on the rates
- 14 part of the equation. We're already seen one
- 15 example of this within a month of the FCC's last
- 16 order, Securus. You know, it was their rates were
- 17 now capped. They changed their fees instead.
- And it's important to note, like Darrell
- 19 said, that these fees are charged at every step of
- 20 the process. They're charged for taking the
- 21 customer's money, for then holding the customer's
- 22 money, and then if the customer wants their money

- 1 back because their loved one is out of the
- 2 facility, they charge money there, too.
- 3 So to kind of give you an idea of the
- 4 scope of the problem, Securus, for example, has
- 5 account funding fees that amount to 32 to 40
- 6 percent of the money deposited to the account, so
- 7 that's 40 percent of the money gone before you
- 8 ever make a phone call. And that's for a website
- 9 or phone -- like automated phone deposits.
- 10 There's nothing fancy. And if somebody wants to
- 11 deposit money through a third-party such as
- 12 MoneyGram, Western Union, the companies charge
- 13 fees there as well. Like Darrell said, there is a
- 14 wide variety that has pretty strong implications
- 15 of kickbacks going forth when -- in the cases that
- 16 the companies are not directly charging an
- 17 additional fee on top of the deposit. And these
- 18 fees I mentioned are on the higher end but they're
- 19 not unusual and there's huge variation between
- 20 providers. NCIC and Pay-Tel here, for example,
- 21 are charging things on the lower end but the
- 22 larger companies like Securus and GTL which should

- 1 really have economies of scale and be able to get
- 2 these fees down, they have -- they're charging
- 3 fees two to three times as much. And that's just
- 4 to get your money into the account.
- 5 Then while the companies are holding
- 6 your money, they're going to charge monthly
- 7 billing fees, other charges on a monthly basis.
- 8 And then if the account doesn't get used enough,
- 9 it goes into inactive status. At that point, the
- 10 company is going to start charging fees as well.
- 11 But then if you want to avoid that and get your
- 12 money back, there are fees for taking your money
- 13 out.
- 14 So in conclusion, fees -- if fees are
- 15 unregulated, it will undermine any regulation of
- 16 phone rates that the FCC attempts. You can't have
- 17 a meaningful cap on the cost of a call when
- 18 companies can just switch their charges to fees.
- 19 So -- because what can seem like reasonable phone
- 20 rates when you look at the cost per minute, it
- 21 doesn't necessarily take into account the fees
- 22 that are charged to get you to that first minute

- 1 and then what happens after you hang up. And the
- 2 FCC kind of attempted to close off some of the
- 3 pricing structure loopholes that we've already
- 4 seen the in past for the increased cost for the
- 5 first minute and so on, and so it calculates the
- 6 fees based on a 15-minute phone call. But what
- 7 happens before that first minute and after the
- 8 15th matters just as much. Thank you.
- 9 MR. PETRO: Well, I'm fortunate to
- 10 follow Aleks and Mr. Baker because then I don't
- 11 have to get into all the details. My name is Lee
- 12 Petro. I'm the pro bono counsel for Martha
- 13 Wright. I'm of counsel at Drinker Biddle & Reath
- 14 and when I took over the case about five years
- 15 ago, the attorney that had been working on it
- 16 said, "You know, you just have to punch it across
- 17 the goal line." What he didn't say was that I had
- 18 to go 99 yards to get to the goal line. And so I
- 19 am fortunate and very thankful for the FCC and for
- 20 all of their staff and all the hard work that they
- 21 have done, and I refer to her as the "Action
- 22 Chairwoman Clyburn" because in her brief period,

- 1 she got more done that many chairman have done in
- 2 the past. So I am very thankful for her -- and
- 3 I've chased her away but it's okay. So thank you
- 4 very much for having me here.
- 5 I wanted to start with the basic
- 6 presumption or basic statement that the
- 7 Communications Act specifically addresses
- 8 ancillary fees. Under Section 201 of the
- 9 Communications Act, the FCC is obligated to deal
- 10 with charges, practices, classifications, and
- 11 regulations and require that those are just and
- 12 reasonable. So it's not a question, and it
- 13 shouldn't ven be a debate, whether the FCC should
- 14 jump into this issue at all. They have the
- 15 jurisdiction and they have the obligation to
- 16 correct unjust and unreasonable fees and ancillary
- 17 fees as well.
- 18 So, you know, what we have seen over the
- 19 years -- and, you know, the Prison Policy
- 20 Initiative has done a lot of the work that I cite
- 21 to, so thank you -- we have seen every time a
- 22 state has taken a look at the ancillary fees and

- 1 the underlying per minute and per call rates and
- 2 actually have been able to get the data from the
- 3 phone companies, those rates have come down and
- 4 the ancillary fees have been capped. That
- 5 happened in New Mexico. It happened in Louisiana
- 6 with a little bit of pushback from, you know, the
- 7 non -- from certain board members, and now in
- 8 Alabama.
- 9 And while the FCC has also asked for the
- 10 data, they haven't gotten it. You know, we
- 11 pointed throughout this proceeding to the initial
- 12 laundry list of specific data asks that the FCC
- 13 made in the notice of proposed rulemaking, and
- 14 none of the phone companies provided that
- 15 responsive information. There have been since
- 16 then cost studies provided by Pay-Tel that have,
- 17 you know, addressed their unique situation. But
- 18 generally speaking, the phone companies have
- 19 politely declined to provide that information. So
- 20 I'm envious that in Alabama, you were actually
- 21 able to get the data. It would be useful to see
- 22 that and hopefully next week we'll start crunching

- 1 the numbers with the data collection on July 17th.
- 2 From my perspective, I would -- I am
- 3 surprised that the sheriffs and the departments of
- 4 corrections are not more interested in tracking
- 5 down these ancillary fees. As Alex noted, these
- 6 are the non-commissionable fees but they equal 40
- 7 percent of the total amount of money that's being
- 8 paid by the inmates' families to the phone
- 9 companies.
- 10 So in my mind, if the sheriffs and the,
- 11 you know, the departments of correction are
- 12 interested in making sure that their budgets are
- 13 maintained and, you know, properly funded, it
- 14 would seem to me that they should read their
- 15 contracts a little bit closer and realize that all
- 16 of those fees are non-commissionable. And so we
- 17 can talk about commissions and we can talk - and
- 18 whether you call them commissions or kickbacks or
- 19 whatever you want to call them, the fact is that
- 20 there is -- you know, 40 percent of the overall
- 21 money being transferred in these relationships are
- 22 being left on the table. And so, you know, if

- 1 commissions are going to stay in place and if the
- 2 fees are going to remain, then they need to be
- 3 minimized and capped like what Alabama has done,
- 4 what New Mexico has done, what Louisiana has done.
- 5 And, you know, I'll finish up just by
- 6 pointing out that since February, we've seen
- 7 efforts to raise the fees and where the companies
- 8 have announced that they're not going to be paying
- 9 commissions on the interstate communications,
- 10 they've also sent letters to their clients
- 11 indicating that they're willing to sit down and
- 12 figure out other ways to make the prison or the
- 13 jail whole. And one can only imagine the process
- 14 of making them whole is by increasing other fees
- 15 that are not in the contract. So thank you very
- 16 much.
- 17 MR. POPE: First, I'd like to thank the
- 18 FCC for the invitation to serve on this panel and
- 19 thank Commissioner Clyburn and her staff for
- 20 pushing the right petition and the inmate phone
- 21 issue to a higher priority.
- 22 My name is Bill Pope. I'm President of

- 1 NCIC Inmate Phone Services. We've been in
- 2 business for about 19 years. We're the fourth
- 3 largest inmate telephone company servicing about
- 4 500 jails across the country. NCIC is an industry
- 5 leader in the movement to lowering fees charged to
- 6 inmate families which is demonstrative of our A-
- 7 plus rating with the Better Business Bureau.
- 8 We've also obtained accreditation with the Better
- 9 Business Bureau in 2012 showing that we can exceed
- 10 expectations of inmates and inmates' families with
- 11 responsible billing.
- 12 Furthermore, NCIC has worked diligently
- 13 on these FCC proceedings as well as on ICS
- 14 proceedings in the states of Louisiana and
- 15 Alabama. NCIC believes that the industry and end-
- 16 users benefit from a consistent rate and fee
- 17 schedule across the nation including all types of
- 18 facilities such as holding facilities, immigration
- 19 detention facilities, jails and prisons.
- 20 Oftentimes, an inmate will be -- can be booked in
- 21 a local facility. Then he's transferred to a
- 22 county facility and then ultimately end up in a

- 1 contract or a state facility and each one may be -
- 2 have a different phone provider in each
- 3 facility. So that calls for the consistency and
- 4 transparency in the rates and the fees.
- 5 This consistency also helps eliminate
- 6 the stress the family members experience during
- 7 the incarceration of their loved one. A
- 8 consistent rate and fee structure will also allow
- 9 family the comfort of understanding and trusting
- 10 the rates of each provider, that each provider
- 11 will be charging because they will be the same.
- 12 Although telecom companies don't
- 13 normally welcome a regulation, we do see the need
- 14 for the FCC and state regulators to set a standard
- 15 rate and fee structure similar to what Darrell at
- 16 the Alabama Public Service Commission finalized
- 17 earlier this week.
- 18 How many fees are used in inmate calling
- 19 services? There are approximately 15 fees that
- 20 the different companies charge. Some of these
- 21 fees are very similar to what you might see on
- 22 your home phone bill or your cell phone bill,

133 maybe government-imposed fees, some are cost recovery fees, some are licensing fees. name a few, pretty much every company charges an account establishment fee either using a live operator or IVR or website to establish the They may have recharger funding fees, refund fees, bill statement fees, processing fees, and then you see your universal service fund fees and taxes. Some companies may charge carrier 10 recovery fees or technology fees, biometric fees. 11 I noticed on my Verizon wireless bill, there was an admin fee, and so a lot of inmate phone 12 providers charge administrative fees as well. 13 Ideally, based off of the research that 14 15 the 16 Alabama Public Service Commission did, 17 there is generally about six fees that all 18 providers charge: 19 the account establishment fee or the 20 initial funding fee either using a live account 21 representative or funding fees using a web page or 22 an IVR system; bill statement processing fees for

- 1 direct billing or billing on a telephone company
- 2 bill; and then finally, there's the fees that
- 3 Western Union or MoneyGram will charge to fund an
- 4 account.
- 5 A lot of these fees evolved out of new
- 6 billing methods that came to replace traditional
- 7 collect calling. Early on, all jail phones were
- 8 just traditional collect calls only. A collect
- 9 call could be validated, placed and the carrier
- 10 would send it out to the local phone company for
- 11 billing and then hope to expect maybe 80-85
- 12 percent of the revenue back on that phone charge.
- 13 As people transitioned to competitive phone
- 14 providers and cell phone services, collect billing
- 15 began a quick decline and had to be replaced with
- 16 new billing methods. Traditional collect calling
- 17 billing has also continued to increase in cost as
- 18 local phone companies increased the cost of
- 19 billing collect call charges on their phone bills
- 20 and have discontinued actively attempting to
- 21 collect those charges.
- 22 Prepaid collect calling from a jail was

- 1 used to replace traditional collect calling. Fees
- 2 were instituted to cover the labor cost and credit
- 3 card fees used in setting up prepaid collect
- 4 calling accounts. This billing option can either
- 5 require a live person to establish the account or
- 6 to utilize a completely automated IVR system to
- 7 save on labor costs. Many inmate phone providers
- 8 use a live account representative to establish an
- 9 account on a realtime basis in order to better
- 10 handle a confused an upset family member who is
- 11 just finding out that their loved one has been
- 12 incarcerated.
- In conclusion, our goal is -- should be
- 14 to simplify these fees so they're easy to
- 15 understand for the family, simplify the rates for
- 16 the inmates. And just to complement the Alabama
- 17 Public Service Commission on their work, they did
- 18 a thorough investigation of the rates and fees and
- 19 required providers to submit the cost data to
- 20 justify their fees. I know Darrell Baker and Doug
- 21 Dillard undertook most of this project and the
- 22 result was a simplification of the fees that

- 1 inmate phone providers can charge to family
- 2 members in the State of Alabama. We hope that the
- 3 FCC and other states investigating inmate phone
- 4 rates will closely review the recent Alabama
- 5 ruling and consider it as a model for both the
- 6 maximum rates and fees that can be charged for
- 7 inmate telephone services.
- 8 MR. TOWNSEND: Great. My name is
- 9 Vincent Townsend. I'm with Pay-Tel
- 10 Communications. I want to thank the FCC for the
- 11 opportunity to be with you today and also
- 12 complement all the panelists that have preceded
- 13 me. I think they've done a really good job of
- 14 hitting this issue.
- 15 I think it's clear -- I hope it's clear
- 16 that unless the FCC addresses the issue of fees,
- 17 we're wasting a lot of everybody's time because
- 18 without addressing the fees, you're never going to
- 19 be able to bring real relief to the families that
- 20 are paying these bills.
- 21 One of the things that they ask us to
- 22 prepare on is what fees have done. And the

- 1 handouts, I think most of you all have seen these,
- 2 but two handouts that I had prepared, one is --
- 3 the first is a list of the fees, the highest fees
- 4 that are out there of a variety of the different -
- 5 this is not an all- inclusive list but it's a
- 6 fairly representative list.
- 7 I want to emphasize right off the start
- 8 that a great number of companies don't charge all
- 9 of these fees and a good number of companies such
- 10 as Bill's company and my company that don't charge
- 11 these high fees. But this is the highest of the
- 12 fees that are out there.
- I put an asterisk by the ones that
- 14 increased since the order and I think that's
- 15 important to understand because that was the
- 16 reaction of what's happened. There's been an
- 17 increase in the fees.
- 18 The second handout is a pie chart that
- 19 we prepared that really brings home, I think, the
- 20 message as to what's happening to the family's
- 21 money. As several folks pointed out, even before
- 22 they make a phone call, they've got to make a

- 1 payment fee and how much is that. In the diagram
- 2 here, that takes about a third of their money.
- 3 And then there are recurring fees that happen on a
- 4 monthly basis and they can come under a whole
- 5 guise of different names and that takes about 10
- 6 percent of their money. And then if they have
- 7 taken and placed just one single call at 1499,
- 8 that takes about 15.
- 9 And the model here is driven off the
- 10 fact that we have an understanding these folks,
- 11 for the most part, are limited income, maybe on
- 12 fixed income, they have a finite amount of money,
- 13 okay. So what happens to that money is critical
- 14 as it relates to connection with their family
- 15 members.
- 16 And this example shows \$100.00, somebody
- 17 has \$100.00 in a month to give for phone calls.
- 18 They make four payments and this is what happens,
- 19 what's left. Out of the \$100.00, there is only
- 20 \$40.00 left to make phone calls. So when you do
- 21 the math on that, it takes the \$3.15 new rate,
- 22 great rate on the interstate call, and what does

139 it turn it into? The real cost to the family on that call is \$8.33. 3 Now that's -- the FCC did a great job in getting started but we ain't done yet, okay. until you fix the fees, it's like spitting in the You're, as I said, wasting everybody's 7 time. 8 The reality here, the family gets 12 9 phone calls out of that 100 bucks. So that's 10 what's got to be addressed. It's got to be 11 addressed. And the other thing that's also interesting and I appreciated Mr. Petro mentioning 12 13 it, I couldn't do this to my clients. have enough guts because they all legally wear 15 guns, okay. But if I was scraping 60 percent of the money off the top before I paid them 17 commissions, I couldn't do that. I respect them 18 too much to do that because it is total deception 19 to go into somebody and say, "Oh, I'm going to 20 give you 80 percent." Well, what's the 80 percent 21 It's really on 40 bucks. What's 80 percent of 40 bucks? Thirty-two percent (sic), okay. But,

140 you know, one day they'll wake up and when they do, I'm glad on I'm on that side and not doing 3 that. So -- but anyway, moving quickly, ancillary fees have gotten worse. I mentioned the ones that I've starred on there. They've 7 increased -- payment fees have gone up with most providers since then. 9 The other thing is a lot of providers have no started the single-call program at the 10 11 higher rate for the call and that does a great job of moving commissionable revenue out of 12 commissionable revenue to bonus revenue which is 13 much, much smaller. The fees that I charge, Bill 15 charges, are on the low end of that spectrum and

In terms of what needs to be done, I

I'll talk about that in just a second.

- 18 think first and foremost, the FCC needs to decide
- 19 what fees are going to be allowed. Okay, my cut
- 20 on that is you ought to get rid of all of them
- 21 except the fees where the consumer makes a choice.
- 22 Let's say your family member is in prison, right,

- 1 and they're there and they're going to be there
- 2 and you know that you can mail in a payment and
- 3 you have no cost, no fee for mailing in the
- 4 payment. Then I don't believe your rate should
- 5 include the cost for somebody who wants to use a
- 6 live operator, which is much more expensive, to do
- 7 a payment than it is to mail it.
- 8 So my cut on it is that number one, you
- 9 decide what you're going to do. Once you decide
- 10 that, then let's have the rest of those fees that
- 11 you approve the cost. The fees that I recommend
- 12 being included are the cost to do a payment on the
- 13 web, a cost to do payment on IVR, a cost of the
- 14 live agent and then you have your other payment
- 15 processor like Western Union and Money Gram. I
- 16 believe also those fees ought to be the very best,
- 17 lowest fee. And so that gives the opportunity for
- 18 the family's money to be in phone calls, not be in
- 19 fees. And I think that's the starting point.
- 20 So if you went down the road with this,
- 21 what would you do? You'd decide the fees that
- 22 were going to be permissible. You'd ban all

- 1 others. You'd cap the fees or put a safe harbor
- 2 rate and it would apply across the country. The
- 3 other thing that I think would be unbelievably
- 4 helpful for the family members is to require the
- 5 vendors -- number one, we got a tariff for
- 6 everything; number two, we got to have it on our
- 7 website. You know, consumer wants to know what
- 8 they're being charged. They have the right to see
- 9 it. They should be able to go to my website and
- 10 see all my fees. We do that today and I know
- 11 several companies do that as well.
- 12 And the last thing, I think -- I know we
- 13 do this -- I think it's something that needs to be
- 14 done -- is provide the family a statement, right.
- 15 If they paid me money over the month, why not give
- 16 them a statement every month that says exactly
- 17 what they spent, what their payment was, any
- 18 state-mandated charges. I mean there are states
- 19 like South Carolina, God bless them, and I think
- 20 there are about eight charges that are their
- 21 mandated charged and it's confusing. And unless
- 22 you put that on a piece of paper for somebody to

143 see, it's really time-consuming to try to explain 2 it. 3 But anyway, in closing, I commend the FCC for what they've done. They got a great start but we're not there yet and we got to get moving. And the critical part of this is the fees. Thank 7 you. 8 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you to all our panelists for your comments. We've got a series 9 10 of questions. We welcome, of course, questions 11 from the audience and from the internet. We're receiving questions via livequestion@fcc.gov and 12 13 via our Twitter account here. Let me begin, Mr. Baker, with you. 14 15 You're in charge in your functions at the 16 Commission of more than just prison pay phones. 17 You're in charge of utility regulation in a 18 broader sense. In those functions, you deal with 19 on a day-to-day basis for a long period of time 20 through your tenure telephone companies that 21 provide normal service, basic telephone POTS service and other types of service. 22

144 1 To what extent are fees like this, like 2 what we've heard about this morning, what you've seen common and used in that setting, in the 3 general provision of telephone service? Well, with the ILECS and 5 MR. BAKER: CLECS, you have a basic level of service and 6 7 that's why I think it's important to define what is basic inmate calling service. And that's a level of service at which everything is provided, you know, essentially at this charge and so any 10 11 fee should be incorporated in the cost. Now --12 but I think Mr. Townsend's right. When a customer 13 has an option to go beyond that basic level of service and, for instance, on payments, they 14 15 should be able to pay by cash, money order, check, 16 and online banking at no charge. But now if they 17 want to get that payment there quicker through the 18 use of a credit card or through a payment transfer 19 service, then they should pay extra for that. 20 I think it's really important to define basic 21 level of service and then go from there. 22 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you.

145 1 MODERATOR LIEN: I have a guestion. 2 sorry, I'm going to start with first names. hope that's alright. Aleks, you had said that ancillary fees are a robust and hidden revenue stream, and I wanted to follow-up with that and also something that Bill said that consistency, 7 transparency, and simplicity should be the goal in rates including ancillary rates. How do we, as the FCC, achieve this? How can we turn ancillary 10 fees into something that are consistent, 11 transparent, and simple instead of a robust and 12 hidden revenue stream? Aleks, anyone, please. 13 MS. KAJSTURA: Well, I think the simplest thing would be to start with the tools 15 that you already have such as the tariffs. If all 16 the rates need to be tariffed, the fees should be 17 too, and I know so companies do it's definitely not standard practiced. I mean that's just a 18 19 really simple that could be taken at least to get 20 a sense of the scope of the problem, what's 21 charged, how much for what in terms of, you know, your data collection. 22

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1 MR. PETRO: Well, we have argued that 2 all of the fees should be eliminated in our proposal, and it's based primarily on the idea that the fees -- or the phone rate itself is so much higher than the cost to providing the service that the ancillary fees that we're talking about can be included in the 25 cents or 21 cents and still provide an equitable result for the phone 9 company as well. You know, we put information 10 into the record in our initial study showing that 11 the costs of providing the service is less than 5 cents. So to the extent that, you know, the other 12 13 14 or 9 cents, you know, 9 to 14 cents are going to be chewed up in ancillary fees or the cost of providing those types of services, you know, the 16 fees can be eliminated. 17 The other way of dealing with it if 18 you're not going to eliminate the ancillary fees 19 is to follow the path of what Alabama has done or 20 New Mexico where you say these are the fees that 21 you can do and you can charge no other fee than 22 these. And I mean if the FCC is going to go down

- 1 the path of, you know, capping fees and not
- 2 eliminating all of them, then I think that's the
- 3 only way you keep it simple and you keep it -- and
- 4 it's transparence on your website, it's on -- you
- 5 know, it's on the tariffs, it's across the board,
- 6 and then anytime a violation can be identified,
- 7 it's a simple complaint process.
- 8 MR. POPE: On top of that, debit calling
- 9 normally doesn't have fees. That's a balance
- 10 that's moved out of the inmate's commissary or
- 11 maybe he's purchasing a calling card. So
- 12 generally, I don't think providers charge fees. I
- 13 know that we don't charge fees on the debit
- 14 calling, so we're talking basically about half the
- 15 calls which is mostly prepaid collect calling
- 16 where the family does pay a fee if they speak with
- 17 a live account representative to establish that
- 18 account on a realtime basis so they can use that
- 19 balance immediately.
- 20 MR. TOWNSEND: I think one of the
- 21 challenges, though, just to point to the debit is
- 22 Bill is correct that there is in many cases a fee

148 that's charged to the family to put the money into the debit account and that's got to be monitored so that there's' not any abuse there. MR. POPE: But further to that, a lot of times it's the commissary provider charging that and they don't even fall under the guise of the 7 FCC, so let's --8 MR. TOWNSEND: Yeah, good point. 9 MODERATOR ZESIGER: I want to just draw your attention again to this pie chart, Vince, 10 11 that you put together. Thank you. That's of service to the whole workshop here understanding, 12 13 of course, these are estimates. And just starting with you, Bill, if you could take a look at that, 15 does that make sense to you, too, as another provider? Is that the kind of breakdown that you 17 see in your business? 18 MR. POPE: I hadn't -- this is the first 19 time I've seen this chart. 20 MODERATOR ZESIGER: So let me let you 21 have a moment to take a look at it to be fair and 22 this takes a sum of \$100.00, Vince, if I

149 understand your pie chart here. Aleks, looking back at the work that you all did --3 MR. POPE: This is the worst case scenario. This is --5 MODERATOR ZESIGER: -- in your report last year, you tried to -- you attempt at least to 6 7 estimate the total dollar value of all these fees. I thought that was a significant effort and I wonder if you'd comment on that in relation to 10 this. 11 MS. KAJSTURA: Sure. I think this would be a subsection of our pie chart that we did as a 12 13 cost of all the money spent on phone calls in the prison system, what percentage would fees be, and 15 this is as further breakdown of that. So this provides a lot of detail. Now one thing I think 17 that -- and we also had to rely on estimates. 18 used one company's fees and -- that were kind of 19 generally applicable and then extrapolated it from 20 So I think this kind of work that Vince 21 has put together is really great because these are 22 figures that nobody's been able to really find so

150 these kind of guesses and estimates are the best 2 we have. 3 And one thing to keep in mind here is there is great variability. Like this is based on \$100.00 but oftentimes, there are maximums just on 5 the payment processing fees here. There would be 7 great variability there based on what is the maximum you're allowed to put in at one time. 9 Oftentimes there are pretty low maximums set that 10 trigger that fee over and over again. So if 11 you're only allowed to put in say \$25.00 at a time, which is not unusual, and they charge your 12 13 \$10.00-\$15.00 a time, to get up to \$100. that's already going to be \$40.00-\$50.00 14 15 right there. 16 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Maybe go back to 17 you, Bill, if you have a moment to --18 MR. POPE: I think Vince's chart is kind 19 of a worst case scenario that yes, there is 20 situations where people deposit -- you know, if 21 they have \$100.00 to spend, they may ultimately

only end up with about \$40.00 to spend on phone

151 1 calls. 2 Going back to Aleks and Peter Wagner with the Prison Policy Initiative, they did a large report on the fees, kind of broke out a lot of the fees. We actually had fees that they showed for us that I didn't even know existed in our tariff, so we quickly went in there and updated our tariffs, removed a lot of those fees. But generally, on our service, if somebody has 10 about \$100.00 to deposit, you know, between 90 to 11 92 percent of that, \$92.00 they'd be able to use for phone calling. 12 13 MODERATOR ZESIGER: I want to get back to the dollar amounts as well to kind of get a 15 sense of the scope of this issue. We've heard testimony and the report, Aleks, that your group 17 has done pointed to something approaching 40 18 percent of all expenses, and I think you said 40 19 percent of something like a billion dollars a year 20 of annual revenues for the industry. I don't want 21 to put words in your mouth but is that roughly the

size of these funds or these revenues that are

152 derived from these fees today as well a year 2 later? 3 MS. KAJSTURA: We haven't been able to update our numbers a year letter. You know, this is a recurring theme here. This data is really hard to get. I know a couple of folks have mentioned more number and Vince has more in his The only one I've come across is Securus 9 raising their fees. So, no, we don't really have 10 updated numbers but I mean we expect to see a 11 shift. 12 MODERATOR ZESIGER: And to go to the two providers, Bill and Vince, do those estimates 13 sound close to what you experience, the percentage 14 15 amounts at least? I think it's 38 percent is what Aleks's study estimated the fees would represent 17 for all expenditures, all revenues? 18 MR. POPE: It can be that high. 19 Depending on the provider, it can be that high. 20 MR. TOWNSEND: I would argue that it's 21 actually getting higher with the advent of the single- call program. If you charge somebody 22

153 \$15.00 for a phone call and you put that in the mix, that's what's in this pie that moves it past their 38 percent. And that's really my observation is more companies have started engaging in that practice since the order. 6 And it accomplishes two things: 7 obviously revenue generator but two, it shields a tremendous amount of money from commissions because that revenue is not on the commission 10 bucket at 80 percent or whatever percent. 11 over here at 10 percent or 3 percent or whatever. 12 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Do we have any way of estimating what percent of all ICS calls are 13 single- call program calls? 15 MR. TOWNSEND: I mean the easiest way to do that would be for the sheriff to take his 17 commission statement this month and look at the 18 number of calls on it and then multiply it, you 19 know, by \$15.00 and multiply by \$10.00 on the 20 I mean we've looked at some of that other one. 21 I've seen some as high as 40 percent of the

revenue -- is at 40 percent, not the measly 15

Workshop on Further Reform of Inmate Calling Services 07-09-2014 154 percent I have on here but as 40 percent of the revenue has been in the single calls. 3 MS. KAJSTURA: I just wanted to add that our chart was based on GTL which is the largest ICS provider, and so, you know, if you're asking Bill and Vincent here whether this reflects their 7 reality, I wouldn't expect it to because they're, again, way more on the reasonable end of things. GTL has some of the highest rates but they take up 10 such a huge share of the market that this is 11 really representative of what it feels from the perspective of the family members, is the 30 12 13 percent.

- MR. TOWNSEND: Yeah. And the pie -- and
- 15 I appreciate Aleks saying that. I mean Bill
- 16 mentioned 90 percent, 92 percent and that example
- 17 for us, the number of calls the family can make is
- 18 not the 12. It's more like 27 or 30 phone calls
- 19 out of the same amount of money.
- 20 MODERATOR LIEN: Darrell, can I ask
- 21 what's your experience been in Alabama with the
- 22 single-call program? What have the challenges

155 been for you? 2 MR. BAKER: Well, I've been in telecommunications for 34 years and 32 at the Alabama Public Service Commission. And one thing I'll say is I have never seen an industry that is less transparent than this one. It is extremely difficult to get data, to get information. get back to your question, I will say this. 9 are calls for Pay Now and Text-Connect that are 10 \$14.99 and \$9.95. There are also providers like 11 NCIC over here who are charging \$5.95 for that Text-Connect service. 12 But again, if the FCC looks at what's 13 happened since February when they implemented the 15 interim rates, a lot of these providers have 16 jumped in now and started offering single-payment 17 services. And so the question is becoming why are 18 they doing that. Well, because there is a source 19 of revenue that's not regulated by the FCC's 20 rates. 21 MR. POPE: Further to what Darrell is 22 saying, and a lot of these -- the SMS text

156 messages are billed by the mobile carriers though, like Verizon, Spring, AT&T Wireless, and so they don't fall under the state regulators. MODERATOR ZESIGER: Lee, if I could --4 MR. PETRO: Sure. MODERATOR ZESIGER: -- direct a question 6 to you? In your opening remarks, you mentioned 7 that Section 201 of the Communications Act was the jurisdictional basis for the Commission acting in 10 this area. Section 276 also addresses some of 11 this. I wonder if you have any comments about the role it plays in providing jurisdiction to the 12 13 Commission. MR. PETRO: Sure. You know, I picked 14 15 201 because they actually lay it out nice and 16 clean, and 276 does as well. You know, the FCC is 17 required to make sure that the rates are fair. 18 And in the order, the FCC made the -- or agreed 19 with us that a fair rate is one that's fair to 20 both the service provider and to the customer. 21 And so to the extent that these ancillary fees 22 and, you know, the single-payment type calls

- 1 result in unfair and unjust and unreasonable
- 2 rates, then the overall impact on the customer is
- 3 -- no longer fits within the confines of Section
- 4 276. So I would argue that because Section 276
- 5 not only deals with the interstate but it deals
- 6 with intrastate as well, you're covered with
- 7 regard to moving forward and dealing with rates
- 8 that are being charged for calls that stay within
- 9 the states as well.
- 10 So I mean I started out talking about
- 11 Section 201 and the jurisdictional question
- 12 because quite frankly, you know, we've seen a lot
- 13 of back and forth in the filings over whether the
- 14 FCC can even regulate this. And it's mystifying
- 15 to me because the FCC regulates so many other
- 16 aspects of telephone calls and basic POTS and the
- 17 rates that can be charged and the types of billage
- 18 you can get that, you know, Section 201 and 276
- 19 provide blanket coverage for inmate phone call --
- 20 or inmate calling services as well. So, I mean, I
- 21 would be interested in seeing an analysis that
- 22 overturns that because I haven't seen it yet.

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1	MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you.	130
2	MR. PETRO: Yeah.	
3	MODERATOR ZESIGER: Want to turn to the	
4	question of cost, the cost of these services.	
5	We've talked about the rates, of course, and	
6	Vince, your company, it kind of stands out in	
7	terms of our record at least, in terms of	
8	attempting to quantify those costs. Last summer	
9	your company submitted extensive cost data and	
10	cost data with regard to the provision of	
11	ancillary services. I wonder other providers	
12	have talked about the difficulty of analyzing and	
13	determining these costs. I wonder if you would	
14	address those questions and just how difficult is	
15	it to come up with a cost figure for some of these	
16	ancillary charges?	
17	MR. TOWNSEND: It's not easy, okay, but	
18	it's data that we keep separated. So by keeping	
19	it separated, we are able to track it and, of	
20	course, since our work last summer, we retained a	
21	consultant, Don Wood, to help us with that study	
22	and he gave us some good guidelines on how to help	

- 1 put all that data together. And then, you know,
- 2 once you have the format in place, it's been --
- 3 it's something we've been able to track and that
- 4 way be prepared for the data requests that you
- 5 folks most recently made.
- 6 It's important, I think -- go back to
- 7 what's been said -- but it's important to
- 8 emphasize that the starting point with our cost
- 9 study was we made a decision that all cost other
- 10 than the payment services were going to be in the
- 11 rate. Okay, so when we did our cost study, the
- 12 rate, our rate included instead of having several
- 13 other fees, just all that was in the basic
- 14 service. So we were then able to separate out and
- 15 have, okay, here's our cost to do an IVR payment,
- 16 a web payment, and here's our cost to do a live
- 17 agent payment. And, you know, it would be a much
- 18 more cumbersome project if we had eight fees and
- 19 I'm trying to allocate cost amongst all the fees.
- 20 So to me, the starting point is to decide what
- 21 fees you're going to allow and then tell me, you
- 22 know, allocate my cost to this fee and that fee

160 and then everything goes in the rate. 2 MODERATOR ZESIGER: And just to get a comparative perspective, Bill, Vince says that he's kept that data, and I guess as a matter of a normal course of business kept that data segregated or apart from his other financial data. How do you all keep your data? Is that the -- is there a way for you all to get at that kind of cost data? 10 MR. POPE: Yeah. There's a way to get to it. It will be difficult, especially if we 11 have to break it down by facility. That's one way 12 we've never looked at it before but looks like 13 we'll be doing that soon anyways. 15 MODERATOR ZESIGER: And with regard to ancillary charges, I don't -- I think that's not a 17 facility specific calculation that's requested so 18 it may be just a little bit easier? 19 MR. POPE: Yeah, that'll be easier. 20 We've got one flat fee structure nationwide. 21 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Good. And just to 22 turn, Darrell, to you on this question of the cost

161 of these services and how closely they compare to the rates. To what extent did the Alabama Commission look at the cost of these and use cost data or cost background to inform your process of setting the rates you set? MR. BAKER: The Alabama Public Service 6 7 Commission, we really don't have any cost data. mean if you look at the FCC record, they didn't have a whole lot either. You had Pay-Tel that 10 submitted their study and we got a hold of the 11 unredacted version of that study and went through You had the 2008 information that was sent to 12 the FCC but other than that, where's the cost 13 stated? They're not providing it, so we went --14 we basically used what was in the FCC record in 16 terms of the setting the fees. MODERATOR LIEN: I'm going to follow-up 17 18 with you Darrell. You had mentioned that in Alabama, you had recently moved to regulate third-19 20 party payment transfer fees. I wonder if you can 21 talk about that a little bit and Aleks or anyone

else, if you have any knowledge of any other

162 states that have acted accordingly, the same or differently than Alabama? 3 MR. BAKER: If you look at payment transfer fees, we're essentially talking about Western Union and MoneyGram. Western Union has a service called "Quick Collect" and they charge 7 \$9.95. We believe there is some revenue sharing that goes on with Quick Collect because we have a 9 comment in our proceeding that said they don't 10 want to reduce that fee because part of it goes to 11 support this other service over here. 12 They also have -- Western Union offers a 13 prepaid service alternative to providers for \$5.95 in Swift Pay, a different system. Swift Pay, I 14 15 believe you have to enter into exclusive 16 agreements with Western Union for \$5.50. 17 have providers in Alabama that are offering to 18 their customers to go through Western Union and 19 pay fees that range from \$5.00 to \$11.95. 20 wait a minute, Western Union charges \$9.95 for 21 Quick Collect. How can it be \$10.95 or \$11.95? I 22 think what you're going to find is that there are

- 1 arrangements that providers can make with Western
- 2 Union to charge more than what it costs for Quick
- 3 Collect in \$1.00 increments, and then that money
- 4 is then returned back to providers so the customer
- 5 is being charged twice. Did that answer your
- 6 question?
- 7 MODERATOR LIEN: Does anyone have any
- 8 information about any other state that has acted
- 9 similarly to Alabama or differently? No?
- MR. POPE: Louisiana is working on the
- 11 rates. They haven't finalized their fee schedule.
- 12 I know Nebraska is talking about it. City of San
- 13 Francisco is working on it. Then I've seen
- 14 something recently about New Jersey looking at
- 15 rate regulation.
- 16 MR. PETRO: And New Mexico had adopted
- 17 just a blanket \$3.00 rate for -- regardless of how
- 18 you fund your accounts so, you know, -- and that
- 19 was based on a comprehensive, or what we think is
- 20 a comprehensive, data collection effort on their
- 21 part. So -- and I think Commissioner Marks was
- 22 here last year talking about that as well.

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1	MODERATOR ZESIGER: Lee, just to follow-
2	up on that point.
3	MR. PETRO: Yeah.
4	MODERATOR ZESIGER: Is the \$3.00 fee
5	applied to the third-party payment programs as
6	well as the direct?
7	MR. PETRO: My notes say yes. I can
8	follow- up and let you know.
9	MODERATOR ZESIGER: Sure.
10	MR. PETRO: But yea, as far as I can
11	tell, you know, they adopted a \$3.00 funding rate
12	and then prohibited any other charge other than
13	what they authorized, and that's why earlier I had
14	commented I mean if the Commission's going to
15	go down the road of permitting some rates to be
16	charged, ancillary fees, then I think what they
17	need to do is just articulate exactly what those
18	rates are and prohibit everything else.
19	And, you know, it would have been useful
20	if we got this information if the FCC got the
21	information when they asked for it in the NPRM in
22	December of 2012 or 9in the data collection
l	

- 1 follow-up supplementary request in July of last
- 2 year or even when they filed -- or even in
- 3 response to the further notice. I think it's
- 4 useful to remember that the FCC has asked for this
- 5 specific information on at least three occasions
- 6 in the past 12 months, 18 months and the parties
- 7 have refused to give it. And so at a certain
- 8 point, I think the FCC is under the obligation to
- 9 just move forward, use the data that they have and
- 10 hopefully what comes in next week will look
- 11 halfway decent and will be accurate and adopt, you
- 12 know, final rules.
- 13 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Good. I want to --
- 14 go ahead, Alex, please.
- MS. KAJSTURA: Let me follow-up on that.
- 16 When the FCC takes a look at the third-party
- 17 payments, I think there are a couple of things
- 18 that you should look for. One, as Darrell
- 19 mentioned, some of the fees that are charged by
- 20 Western Union are much lower than the others and -
- 21 but some of those are then coupled with a fee
- 22 from the ICS company itself. So when basically

- 1 the ICS company doesn't take advantage of the
- 2 kickback from Western Union, they just slap on
- 3 their own fee instead. So that is something to
- 4 watch for I think is that it wouldn't be enough
- 5 just to lower the fees for Western Union. You
- 6 have to then also make sure that the company isn't
- 7 charging its own separate fee for having accepted
- 8 the Western Union payment.
- 9 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you. I want
- 10 to step back for a moment. We've had several
- 11 statements from several panelists as to fees that
- 12 are appropriate and fees that are not appropriate.
- 13 I want to just kind of get a little more of a
- 14 focus on that from each of the panelists. And
- 15 Darrel, I'll start with you to give you heads up
- 16 here, and you've addressed this in part, but if
- 17 you can just be as specific as you can be this
- 18 morning -- this afternoon now, what are
- 19 appropriate types of charges and what kinds of
- 20 charges are problematic or inappropriate?
- 21 MR. BAKER: We -- again, we establish a
- 22 basic level of service for ICS and then look

- 1 beyond that, you know, what should be provided in
- 2 that to the customer free of charge in terms of
- 3 ancillary charges or ancillary services. And then
- 4 we go beyond that to see, okay, what is beyond
- 5 that. And I think if the customer has an option
- 6 on payment, if they want to submit payment by
- 7 credit card which gets there quicker than money
- 8 order or check, then we establish that as a fee
- 9 because it's an option. And then there are
- 10 various ways of making payments. There's IVR,
- 11 there's live agent and they all carry with them
- 12 different costs.
- 13 And then the other thing is if we -- in
- 14 Alabama, we say that everybody is entitled to an
- 15 account statement electronically except for debit.
- 16 Inmates obviously don't have access to it. But if
- 17 that customer wants a paper bill, then we
- 18 establish a minimal paper bill fee for them to
- 19 going to get that service. So anything that's
- 20 optional.
- 21 MS. KAJSTURA: I agree with Darrell on
- 22 what he mentioned earlier about the regulatory

- 1 recovery fees. I mean that's just the cost of
- 2 doing business. That shouldn't be feed out
- 3 separately. And beyond that, you really need to
- 4 take a look at how much the fees are apart from
- 5 the question of which fee should or should not be
- 6 allowed. You know, in life, we all pay
- 7 convenience fees for all sorts of things we do
- 8 with our credit cards but just the size of the
- 9 those fees just doesn't even begin to compare to
- 10 the fees charged in this setting.
- 11 And one thing on -- I think Darrell
- 12 mentioned grouping it into optional versus service
- 13 -- one thing to keep in mind would be in the jail
- 14 setting where just circumstances necessitate a
- 15 quicker method of payment than sending a check
- 16 that may take a week to get processed, so that
- 17 might be somewhere if that were the route that FCC
- 18 were to take, to maybe have some exceptions in
- 19 those cases.
- MR. PETRO: I started earlier, none.
- 21 You know, as far as we have been able to
- 22 determine, the ancillary fees are a mechanism to

- 1 make up for reductions in rates. We've seen now
- 2 with the reduction in the interstate rates an
- 3 increase in the intrastate rates and an increase
- 4 in the ancillary fees, and we have yet to see the
- 5 data that would support that. And, you know, to
- 6 the extent that there is data that would support
- 7 the imposition of ancillary fees, and to the
- 8 extent that the ICS providers refused to provide
- 9 it to the FCC, then one approach would be to ban
- 10 ancillary fees and then have them come in and ask
- 11 for a waiver much like Pay-Tel did with their
- 12 waiver to substantiate a variation from the rule.
- 13 So, you know, until we can get a cleaner
- 14 answer on what it actually costs to provide the
- 15 phone service and then what that rate should be --
- 16 I mean if the FCC had adopted our 7 cent per
- 17 minute rate, then perhaps we could have a
- 18 discussion about what those -- or whether there
- 19 are good ancillary fees. But instead, we're at 21
- 20 and 25 which is what we had proposed back in 2007
- 21 based on 2005 data. And the fees are, you know,
- 22 as we're talking, \$11.00 for a wire transfer but

- 1 when you walk into, you know, Walmart, you're not
- 2 paying \$11.95 for a wire transfer and you're not
- 3 paying when you're on Amazon to use your credit
- 4 card to make a payment.
- 5 So, you know, until we can figure out
- 6 and get the different Lego pieces and start
- 7 stacking up what the costs are, I would say none.
- 8 MR. POPE: The Alabama Public Service
- 9 Commission covered about six fees in their recent
- 10 ruling. They had account funding fee with a live
- 11 operator. I mean prior to prepaid collect
- 12 calling, inmates, you know, they couldn't speak to
- 13 a live operator, still don't let them speak to a
- 14 live operator but we put them on hold and call out
- 15 to the family and the family can talk to a live
- 16 operator realtime. So that's basically the fee is
- 17 used as a cost recovery to offer that live human
- 18 interaction there.
- 19 Generally, the fees had started out as a
- 20 cost recovery. Some of them probably moved up
- 21 beyond the actual cost recovery. Some of the fees
- 22 -- there's like a voice biometrics fee. We have

- 1 to pay a license to a third party for that, so
- 2 ideally I'd like to recover that. But, you know,
- 3 for the most part, I believe the Alabama Public
- 4 Service Commission covered most of the fees in
- 5 their ruling.
- 6 MR. TOWNSEND: Yeah. I would echo again
- 7 what I said earlier. I think to me, what I
- 8 characterize as ancillary fees are all these extra
- 9 things that really should be incorporated into the
- 10 cost of the call. To me, the fees that should be
- 11 separated are the ones that are driven by consumer
- 12 choice. If the family, as I stated earlier, the
- 13 loved one is in prison and they know that and they
- 14 send in a payment or they do a bank transaction
- 15 and there is no cost, they ought to have the right
- 16 to do that and not have their rate include the
- 17 cost that it takes for a family member to use a
- 18 live agent to set up an account.
- 19 And I appreciate Aleks's comment because
- 20 she's spot on. In the jail environment,
- 21 everything happens rapid fire, 25 hours a day, 7
- 22 days a week, and you take -- and a facility that

- 1 has 200 inmates, in that 30 days, you're going to
- 2 probably run about 625 inmates through the
- 3 facility, a third of which will make phone calls
- 4 and not one of them will be a revenue producer for
- 5 our company. The two-thirds -- that two- thirds,
- $\mathsf{6}$ those folks that are left, the $\mathsf{400}$, on average we
- 7 set up five accounts for each one of those four.
- 8 And again, rapid fire, all the time, 24 hours a
- 9 day.
- 10 And that individual makes that choice;
- 11 do they use a credit card and go on the web; do
- 12 they use a credit card and do it with an IVR; or
- 13 do they talk to a live agent. All of those costs
- 14 are different. What I tried to do and what I've
- 15 presented to the FCC last July in response to
- 16 their request was we said all of these other
- 17 things are in the rate. The only thing separate
- 18 are basically what the Alabama Commission did,
- 19 what Bill just talked about, is on this chart.
- 20 It's just to make a payment with the IVR, make a
- 21 payment with the web, do a live agent payment, and
- 22 then of course your other Western Union and your

- 1 MoneyGram. But I think those things are
- 2 imperative that those be treated separately.
- 3 Those be at cost, not be a profit center, and that
- 4 way the consumer -- and one thing we do -- just as
- 5 an side, really quickly -- is -- it's very
- 6 interesting.
- Western Union doesn't like this news but
- 8 at one point in time, about 40 percent of our
- 9 customer base, the families, we saw were making
- 10 payments with cash. And so what we started
- 11 advertising on our website was the most economical
- 12 way was that they could go and get a debit card,
- 13 so they could then take the debit card, either buy
- 14 one at Walmart or Walgreens or somewhere, and then
- 15 take that card and then make a payment over the
- 16 web or on the automated phone system. And in our
- 17 world, that payment fee for us is three bucks. So
- 18 that beat the 5.95 we had at western Union which
- 19 is already low and it beat the 5.65 that was at
- 20 MoneyGram.
- 21 So again, educating the consumer, giving
- 22 them the choice, what's the most economical way if

174 they want to get money on an account and do it quickly. In our environment, because we serve jails, we try to give them those tools so they can then make the intelligent choice. But from our perspective, having those 5 things separated, having a cost for those, having 6 7 it cost is paramount for this to be a viable model going forward, has to have that. MODERATOR ZESIGER: Thank you. This 9 brings to a close our question and answer period. 10 11 Thank you to the panelists for the second panel. You've made a significant and material 12 contribution to our process. We look forward to 13 continuing to stay in touch with you all and 15 working with you all as we go forward. It's time for our lunch break at this 16 17 point. I think we're due back 2:00 o'clock. 18 you. 19 (Whereupon, off the record for a lunch 20 recess.) 21 MODERATOR GUDE: All right. Thank you, 22 everyone. We are ready to start our panel number

175 The topic of this panel is "Understanding the provision of ICS in different facilities, understanding cost structure, service differences, etcetera based on size of facility, based on prison, jails, other distinctions that are out there. 7 My fellow moderators, my colleague Lynne Engledow will join me and everyone has already met 9 Darrell Baker from the Alabama PCS. He has kindly 10 agreed to serve as a moderator here as well. 11 In terms of panelists, we have Elias Diggins, Denver Sheriff Department on behalf of 12 the American Jail Association. We have Alex 13 Friedmann from Prison Legal News. We have Aleks 14 15 Kajstura from Prison Policy Initiative, Kevin 16 Landy from the U.S. Immigration Customs 17 Enforcement Department of Homeland Security. We 18 have Richard Smith, CEO of Securus, and we have 19 Thomas Sweeney from Global Tel Link. 20 So, with that, we will turn it over to 21 Elias to kick us off. Thank you. 22 MR. DIGGINS: Good afternoon. It is

- 1 truly an honor and privilege to be before the FCC
- 2 today and to represent jails from across this
- 3 great nation. My name is Elias Diggins and I'm a
- 4 Division Chief with the Denver Sheriff's
- 5 Department in Denver, Colorado where I have served
- 6 for 20 years. I'm here today as a Board member
- 7 for the American Jail Association, a body of
- 8 detention and corrections professionals who
- 9 represent the voice of the United States 3,000-
- 10 plus local detention facilities.
- 11 Through the work I've been involved with
- 12 in running one of the largest jails in the country
- 13 as well as my work with the American Jail
- 14 Association, the American Correctional
- 15 Association, and the National Institute of
- 16 Corrections Large Jail Network, and in
- 17 conversations with the National Sheriff's
- 18 Association, I can tell you that at every
- 19 conference and every venue at every level, this
- 20 issue is on the forefront of discussion of jail
- 21 administrators of facilities of all sizes. When
- 22 discussing what is just, reasonable, and fair in

- 1 this forum, it is our hope that the same values
- 2 are extended to us when considering the charge
- 3 which we are called to do, to serve and protect
- 4 our community by keeping America's jails safe and
- 5 secure.
- 6 My first point of discussion is how
- 7 sophisticated the phone systems have become and
- 8 how we as law enforcement officials have come to
- 9 rely on this irreplaceable tool to combat crime at
- 10 all levels. Included in the comments to the FCC
- 11 regarding this issue was a correspondence from the
- 12 District Attorney of Denver Colorado, Mr. Mitch
- 13 Morrissey. In his letter, he specifically talks
- 14 about the killing of Denver Bronco Darren Williams
- 15 and how the technology used in our inmate calling
- 16 system became critical evidence in the conviction
- 17 of the parties to this horrible crime.
- 18 Unfortunately, criminal activity is often
- 19 generated from behind the walls of jails and those
- 20 involved are becoming even more smarter about how
- 21 to circumvent our discovery of their activities.
- 22 ICS providers must be allowed to remain

- 1 competitive as they continue to introduce newer,
- 2 better and bolder technologies as we protect our
- 3 community. Should the ICS providers or agencies
- 4 who oversee jails not be able to afford to run
- 5 them as they do today, we will certainly take a
- 6 step back in the prevention of crime if these
- 7 systems are reduced to simple mechanisms, or in
- 8 the worst case scenario, are removed altogether.
- 9 The second point I would like to make is
- 10 there has to be a clarification from the FCC on
- 11 what is required in regard to commissions and cost
- 12 recovery. This applies not only to the previous
- 13 interstate ruling but should be clearly spelled
- 14 out in any decision regarding intrastate
- 15 guidelines. There still exists today confusion
- 16 not only amongst the many sheriffs and jail
- 17 administrators across the country but various
- 18 inmate calling systems providers also. To that
- 19 end, cost recovery will vary from jail to jail and
- 20 state to state as the salaries and expenses each
- 21 agency incurs in managing their systems is ever
- 22 different. The salary of a sheriff's deputy who

179 is responsible for monitoring a system in Washington, DC is not the same as his counterpart in New Orleans or Dallas or Polk County, Florida or Salt Lake City. We're glad to hear that the FCC plans to work with each state or each state's sheriff's association to create a reasonable rate for cost recovery in their jurisdictions. 8 My last and final point is to address 9 the assertion that jail and prison administrators 10 are resistive to changing the rates or model of 11 inmate calling systems and therefore, and I quote, reducing recidivism is not one of our priorities. 12 Nothing could be further from the truth. 13 been to jails in El Central, California, in 15 Brandon, Mississippi and Licking County, Ohio, and 16 Tampa Bay, Florida and many others. There was not 17 one that I visited where the sheriff or jail

- 19 offenders which are geared toward reducing

administrator was focused on programs for

20 recidivism.

- 21 In regard to inmate phone systems, we
- 22 too want the folks in our custody to stay in

- 1 contact with their families since this helps them
- 2 to stay focused on completing their sentences and
- 3 allows them to take advantage of the opportunities
- 4 to prepare prior to release and to be successful.
- 5 When a person is worried about their family, they
- 6 certainly are not concerned about the classes we
- 7 have to offer. We want them to be engaged in
- 8 those programs and staying connected to their
- 9 support system outside the jail helps them while
- 10 they're in custody and is important for them in
- 11 not returning.
- We want to have the discussion regarding
- 13 what is just, reasonable, and fair when it comes
- 14 to call rates. We simply just want to make sure
- 15 that the methodology to this issue comes with a
- 16 balanced approach that preserves the interest of
- 17 all parties to the subject including the thousands
- 18 of law enforcement officers who are charged every
- 19 day in serving America's jails. Thank you.
- 20 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you very much,
- 21 Elias. Next, Alex Friedmann.
- 22 MR. FRIEDMANN: I would like to thank

- 1 Chairman Wheeler and the Commission for this
- 2 opportunity to address the continuing need for
- 3 reform of the prison telecommunications industry.
- 4 There are a number of cost drivers for the
- 5 provision of inmate calling services including
- 6 notably the commissions paid to contracting
- 7 government agencies such as departments of
- 8 corrections and sheriffs offices, plus there are
- 9 infrastructure costs of installing the phones
- 10 themselves and related hardware, security- related
- 11 costs regarding security features such as call
- 12 recording, three-way call detection biometrics
- 13 which are often software-based and automated, and
- 14 there are costs associated with setting up and
- 15 monitoring phone accounts for prisoners and those
- 16 they call, mainly their family members.
- 17 While inmate calling services in jail
- 18 are -- the cost of inmate calling services in
- 19 jails are reportedly higher than in prisons, the
- 20 actual cost of providing such services are largely
- 21 unknown because most prison phone providers have
- 22 not made their actual cost data of service

- 1 available to the Commission. Costs based on a
- 2 tiered basis due to facility size may be
- 3 appropriate but should be evidence-based and where
- 4 the record lacks evidence, it's difficult to do
- 5 that.
- 6 My discussion will focus on ICS
- 7 commissions which constitute a cost driver that if
- 8 eliminated demonstrably results in lower prison
- 9 and jail phone rates. I'll first discuss state
- 10 prison systems. Eight states have eliminated ICS
- 11 commissions. These eight prison systems span a
- 12 tremendous range in size form a prison population
- 13 of around 135,000 in California and 54,000 in New
- 14 York to around 6,500 in New Mexico and just 2,000
- 15 in Rhode Island. Yet when these states banned ICS
- 16 commissions, the results were remarkably similar.
- 17 Their phone rates dropped, often dramatically.
- 18 Using the example of a 15-minute collect
- 19 interstate call prior to the FCC's rate caps going
- 20 into effect, after New York dropped its
- 21 commission, phone rates fell almost 69 percent to
- 22 less than a nickel a minute, one of the lowest in

- 1 the nation. ICS rates in Michigan dropped 87
- 2 percent from \$17.34 to \$2.25 for a 15-minute
- 3 collect interstate call, and South Carolina prison
- 4 phone rates fell from \$5.19 for interstate calls
- 5 to the current rate of a flat 99 cents, an 81
- 6 percent decrease. California is an instructive
- 7 example because that state phased out its ICS
- 8 commissions from a flat \$26 million dollars in
- 9 commissions prior to 2007 to zero in 2011. As the
- 10 commissions were phased out, in each successive
- 11 year, the cost of phone calls dropped accordingly
- 12 from \$17.30 for a 15-minute collect interstate
- 13 call before 2007 to around \$6.60 in 2011 for an
- 14 almost 62 percent total decrease.
- Note that in these examples, the need
- 16 for infrastructure cost did not change in the
- 17 eight states that eliminated ICS commissions nor
- 18 did the need for security features in their phone
- 19 systems. Despite the fixed infrastructure and
- 20 security costs, their phone rates plummeted
- 21 indicating that ICS commissions represent a
- 22 primary cost driver for prison phone services.

184 1 However, prisons are different from 2 jails. While typically much smaller than prisons, jails have similar infrastructure and security In addition, far more people cycle in and out of jails, around 11.6 million people per year, and some ICS providers have cited this churn as an additional cost driver for jail phone services. 8 After the Commission's rate cap for 9 interstate phone calls went into effect, the New 10 Jersey Department of Corrections stopped 11 collecting ICS commissions effective February 11th, 2014, and reduced its phone rates to a flat 12 17 cents per minute. As part of its ICS contract 13 extension, the state included a matrix for phone 14 15 rates and commissions for county correctional 16 facilities in New Jersey. Around 17 counties in 17 New Jersey act under the state's DOC contract. 18 Those counties participating include 19 those with small jails such as Hunterdon with 150 20 inmates, medium jails such as Summerset County 21 with 440 inmates, and large jails including Camden

County with around 1300 inmates. The matrix

- 1 consisted of a scale of commission rates and
- 2 corresponding phone rates with only one exception
- 3 as the ICS commissions decreased from a high of 56
- 4 percent to a low of 15 percent. Under six options
- 5 in the matrix, the corresponding phone rates also
- 6 decreased. For example, using 15- minute
- 7 intra(inaudible) calls as an example, the rates
- 8 dropped from \$5.50 with a 56 percent commission to
- 9 \$4.75 with a 55 percent commission to \$4.20 with a
- 10 54 percent commission to \$3.50 with a 35 percent
- 11 commission and so on. So as the commissioner
- 12 percentages dropped, the phone rates dropped. The
- 13 one exception was for the 53 percent commission
- 14 level which had slightly higher rates.
- Note that these phone rates apply to
- 16 county facilities in New Jersey with different
- 17 population levels, different sizes and different
- 18 levels of churn, and the number of phones
- 19 installed at the facilities also differed. They
- 20 ranged from 15 to 165 phones in each jail. Yet in
- 21 spite of the varying infrastructure costs and the
- 22 consistent need for ICS security features in their

- 1 phone systems, the rates at these county
- 2 facilities were primarily dependent on one factor
- 3 which was the commission percentage. So this is
- 4 the actual chart. And the only differentiating
- 5 factor between the rates is the commissions. The
- 6 matrix is not based on facility size or facility
- 7 population level or facility churn. The only
- 8 corresponding factor with lowering of rates is
- 9 lowering of commission payments.
- 10 Finally, according to recent news
- 11 reports, San Francisco recently announced that it
- 12 was reducing its jail phone rates. The cost of a
- 13 15-minute collect in-state call will drop by 70
- 14 percent, and a 15-minute collect local call will
- 15 cost \$2.75 instead of \$4.45, a 38 percent
- 16 decrease. The jail security needs did not change.
- 17 They're not scaling back on security features in
- 18 their phone systems. The infrastructure costs for
- 19 the jails' phone system did not change. They're
- 20 not pulling phones out of the jail. The churn of
- 21 inmates processed through the jail has not
- 22 changed. So what changed? I called up Sheriff

187 Ross Mirkarimi yesterday and spoke with him and he said that the primary change is that his office will take in around 17 percent less in commissions under the new pricing structure. that's what changed, the commissions 5 changed. 6 7 So it appears that the primary cost driver for inmate calling services, whether in 9 prisons or in jails, regardless of facility size, 10 population levels, churn, infrastructure cost or 11 security features is the commissions that ICS providers pay to the corrections agencies they 12 contract with. There are definitely differences 13 in facility size and there may be some 15 justification for tiered rates, but those rates have to be based on evidence showing a difference 17 in actual cost of phone calls. Thank you. 18 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you very much. 19 Aleks, I don't want to butcher your last name 20 again, so I'm going to stop there. Thank you. 21 MS. KAJSTURA: So our point of view at the Prison Policy Initiative is that any 22

- 1 difference between prisons and jails or
- 2 differently sized facilities is just irrelevant to
- 3 the question of predatory pricing. Sure, there
- 4 are differences in providing services to different
- 5 facilities and one of those factors might be the
- 6 size of the facility. But that doesn't mean that
- 7 people held in one size facility versus another
- 8 should be denied some reasonable controls over the
- 9 pricing of the telephone systems there. And so
- 10 from that perspective of whether or not the FCC
- 11 should protect customers that have loved ones in
- 12 jails, this distinction between facility size in
- 13 prison and jail is somewhat irrelevant.
- 14 And as an aside, some might find it
- 15 helpful to keep in mind that over 60 percent of
- 16 the jail population on any given day is not
- 17 convicted. There are people who have been
- 18 arrested. They're trying to make bail. They're
- 19 still presumed to be innocent under the law.
- 20 And it's also important to keep things
- 21 in perspective when talking about facility sizes
- 22 and types. For example, in the past, a lot of

- 1 folks have brought up the fact that, you know,
- 2 there are all these facilities out there that are
- 3 really small, very expensive, like 15-person
- 4 jails. And sure, there are a few facilities that
- 5 are that small and in a whole number -- as a whole
- 6 number, it's not that small of a number of
- 7 facilities but the people kept in those facilities
- 8 make up one-fifth of one percent of the
- 9 incarcerated population of the United States. Or
- 10 if you go up to facilities that I think are 40 or
- 11 50 people, that becomes three percent of the
- 12 people that are incarcerated.
- So the FCC shouldn't really be driven by
- 14 discussion of these complete outliers on the
- 15 question of whether or not it should be applying
- 16 these very necessary regulations to jails, jails
- 17 in general, especially since we found that it's
- 18 the jails that have the highest commission rates
- 19 and therefore the highest phone call rates.
- 20 And, you know -- so if the FCC decides
- 21 to -- that a line needs to be drawn somewhere in
- 22 terms of facility size, then I would argue against

- 1 using labels such as prison or jail to determine
- 2 where that line should be drawn because, you know,
- 3 for the applicability of those regulations
- 4 because, for example, Elias's jail, like he
- 5 mentioned, is one of the largest in the country.
- 6 It's larger than five whole prison systems. Like
- 7 there are five state prison systems where all the
- 8 prisons in -- all the incarcerated people under
- 9 that state system are a smaller than in that one
- 10 single jail. So in terms of economies of size and
- 11 in terms of having to deal with one person versus
- 12 many facilities or central administration and all
- 13 those kinds of arguments, the label of jail or
- 14 prison just isn't' a very helpful guideline.
- But I think in the end, the kind of
- 16 facility that your loved one is held in just
- 17 really shouldn't determine how much you have to
- 18 pay for a phone call.
- 19 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you very much.
- 20 Kevin.
- 21 MR. LANDY: Hi. I'd like to thank the
- 22 Commissioners of the FCC for inviting me to speak

- 1 on this panel. You all may have noticed at the
- 2 headquarters for the Immigration and Customs
- 3 Enforcement Building is just across the street
- 4 from the FCC building. For many of us at ICE, FCC
- 5 is simply the agency with the nice courtyard where
- 6 we can sit outside while we eat lunch. Our two
- 7 agencies have very different missions so it's
- 8 gratifying that what brings me here today is our
- 9 shared interest in ensuring low-cost telephone
- 10 services to detainees and not the delicious stir-
- 11 frys at your cafeteria.
- In my remarks today, I will primarily be
- 13 describing the rates and services provided through
- 14 our ICE Detainee Telephone Service provider, also
- 15 known as DTS. Since 2010, these services have
- 16 been provided by Talton Communications which was
- 17 awarded the DTS contract after a full and open
- 18 competition. Before getting into the details of
- 19 the DTS contract, some background on the agency's
- 20 unique detention system is necessary.
- 21 ICE detains approximately 34,000 at any
- 22 given time in more than 200 facilities across the

- 1 country. More than 400,000 people each year are
- 2 booked into ICE custody for some length of time
- 3 with an average length of stay of under a month.
- 4 Most of the detention facilities that ICE uses are
- 5 county jails which have a mix ICE detainees and
- 6 non-ICE prisoners. However, most of our largest
- 7 facilities are operated by private contractors and
- 8 hold exclusively ICE detainees. We call the
- 9 latter dedicated facilities.
- 10 Paid telephone services are offered by
- 11 our DTS provider at 16 ICE detention facilities
- 12 including almost all dedicated facilities. These
- 13 facilities range in population from 300 to 1800
- 14 and collectively house approximately 13,000
- 15 detainees on average which represents about 40
- 16 percent of our average population.
- 17 The DTS contract is provided at no cost
- 18 to ICE with Talton assuming responsibility for
- 19 installation and maintenance of all necessary
- 20 hardware and network services. ICE receives no
- 21 commission from Talton. Detainees are charged low
- 22 rates of 10 cents per minute for domestic calls

- 1 with no additional connection fees or ancillary
- 2 charges. These rates are well below the upper
- 3 limit imposed by FCC's recent order on inmate
- 4 calling services. ICE's DTS rates are lower even
- 5 than the Safe Harbor rates which the FCC presumes
- 6 charges to be lawful.
- 7 In its order, the FCC accordingly
- 8 applauded ICE's efforts to reduce rates to
- 9 reasonable, affordable levels.
- 10 ICE detainees are also charged a uniform
- 11 rate of 15 cents per minute for international
- 12 calls to landlines and 35 cents per minute for
- 13 international calls to mobile phones. Since the
- 14 DTS contract was awarded, the number of calls per
- 15 detainee and minutes per detainee has increased
- 16 substantially.
- 17 In addition, the DTS contract provides
- 18 for free telephone calling services to select
- 19 numbers through a centralized pro bono platform
- 20 which can be accessed at any detention facility
- 21 regardless of whether it's a pay services or
- 22 furnished by Talton or a different service

- 1 provider. This pro bono platform enables
- 2 detainees who dial in to place free calls to a
- 3 number of entities including foreign consulates,
- 4 immigration courts, and hotlines operated by ICE
- 5 and by the DHS Office of Inspector General.
- 6 At many of the detention facilities
- 7 where Talton is not the primary provider, Talton
- 8 must pay per call compensation to ensure detainees
- 9 have access to the pro bono platform. Those
- 10 additional costs are not passed along to ICE or to
- 11 the ICE detainees making the calls.
- 12 These low rates and the additional cost
- 13 of maintaining the pro bono platform have not come
- 14 at the cost of decreased service or security. The
- 15 DTS contract provides for a number of security
- 16 features important to the confinement setting
- 17 including utilization of voice biometrics and
- 18 remote live monitoring and recording capability
- 19 for all non- privileged calls. With respect to
- 20 service, Talton has recently increased the minimum
- 21 number of telephones available to one telephone
- 22 per every 10 detainees. It did so in response to

195 a non-binding provision in our most recent detention standards which establish the 10 to 1 ratio as a benchmark for optimal performance. ICE has an interest in ensuring low phone rates and sufficient access for its detainees even at facilities where its DTS 7 contractor is not offering paid telephone services. In fact, it is ICE policy incorporated in national detention standards that all detention 10 facilities provide reasonable and equitable access 11 for reasonably priced telephone services. 12 Since 2008, ICE detention standards have required that contracts for telephone services 13 comply with all applicable state and federal 14 regulations and that rates are based on rates and 15 16 surcharges comparable to those charged to the

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general public. Any variations from public rates

must reflect the actual costs associated with the

ICE

provision of services in a detention setting.

conducts ongoing oversight to ensure facility

However, it can be difficult for ICE to ensure

compliance with those detention standards.

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- 1 that rates are comparable to those charged to the
- 2 general public due to the complexity and variety
- 3 of telephone rates and plans.
- 4 FCC's recent order therefore provides
- 5 much needed clarity regarding the legal
- 6 requirement that telephone rates, charges, and
- 7 practices for detainees be just, reasonable, and
- 8 fair. And our DTS contract demonstrates that all
- 9 of the requirements in the FCC order can be met
- 10 without any reduction in security or quality of
- 11 services. Thank you.
- 12 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you very much,
- 13 Kevin. Next, Richard Smith.
- MR. SMITH: Thank you and thank you,
- 15 Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn and
- 16 Commissioner Rosenworcel for putting this panel
- 17 together. It's a wonderful event in which we can
- 18 all share ideas on how to get this project done.
- 19 It's clear from the panels' debates that we've
- 20 heard so far that we need a lot of work to get
- 21 this done in the right way. We need to deal with
- 22 commissions. We need to deal with security issues

- 1 and we can't let these slip. And we need to deal
- 2 with rates and fees. It's a hard project. That's
- 3 why it's taken us nearly 10 years to get to the
- 4 point that we're at today, but it can be done and
- 5 I think it needs to get done right.
- 6 My name is Rick Smith and I represent
- 7 Securus Technologies. I'm the Chief Executive
- 8 Officer of the company. A little bit about
- 9 Securus. We've been in business for 26 years. We
- 10 serve almost one million out of the 2.3 million
- 11 inmates with some form of the products that we
- 12 have today. We have 1000 dedicated employees in
- 13 46 states and the District of Columbia. We allow
- 14 inmates to communicate with friends and family
- 15 members in a safe and secure way. We have 650
- 16 products, 650 products that we have, most of those
- 17 dedicated to safety and security, and we help to
- 18 protect society, inmates, corrections officers,
- 19 judges, witnesses, and more by making sure that
- 20 communications are well-intended and not used for
- 21 the wrong purposes. It's what we do that keeps us
- 22 all safe.

- 1 At some point in the presentation and
- 2 these discussions, I always get around to
- 3 discussing where I think we stand in terms of a
- 4 competitive company with competitive returns. And
- 5 I've heard three words during the session so far.
- 6 One is that rates are egregious. One is that
- 7 rates are abusive, and the other one is that rates
- 8 are predatory. I can look at our bottom line and
- 9 compare that to other companies' bottom lines.
- 10 Most of these companies you've heard of. And so a
- 11 few statistics before we can use any of those
- 12 words.
- 13 I looked at net income, kind of what you
- 14 can get from public statements, as a percentage of
- 15 profit. And here's the listing. Verizon was at
- 16 14.3 percent; not bad. Time Warner was at 11.4
- 17 percent, and I'm going in descending order now.
- 18 AT&T, we've all heard of AT&T and what they do,
- 19 they're at 10 percent. Century Link, think of that
- 20 as U.S. West Embark, Century, pretty big company.
- 21 I think the fourth largest local exchange carrier
- 22 in the United States; they're at 5 percent. And

- 1 now Securus brings up the rear at 1.4 percent. So
- 2 Verizon makes roughly 10 times what I make on a
- 3 comparable basis. Time Warner makes eight times
- 4 what I make. AT&T makes seven times what I make.
- 5 Century Link makes four times what I make. I'm
- 6 not saying that any of those are bad. I'm just
- 7 putting these things in the proper perspective in
- 8 terms of what we make bottom line after all of our
- 9 costs, and commissions does represent a
- 10 significant portion of our costs is a relatively
- 11 small number.
- So we don't earn excessive profits. We
- 13 don't earn excessive profits. We don't earn
- 14 excessive profits. I said that three times for
- 15 the egregious and abusive and predatory kinds of
- 16 comments that come at us most of the time.
- 17 There are two charts that I have up here
- 18 and these go directly to the panel's theme,
- 19 understanding the provision of ICS in different
- 20 facilities and understanding what the cost drivers
- 21 are. The one on your left, that kind of vertical
- 22 one, I know you can't see that but you have this

- 1 data -- both these charts available to you. They
- 2 were passed out. If you don't have them, there
- 3 are copies over there. And we've been doing this
- 4 for a lot of years meaning looking at contracts,
- 5 putting together a model of what we can build for
- 6 these things.
- 7 And there are 85 different variables
- 8 that we've developed over the last 26 years, and
- 9 we've priced out approximately 50,000 contracts
- 10 over that period of time. So we have a relatively
- 11 large depth and breadth of experience on the cost
- 12 element side. And you can read these 85 items.
- 13 There are 16 numerically and then when you add up
- 14 all the bullets, there are a lot of things there.
- 15 Our business is complicated. Many people that I
- 16 talk to, some people who I think should know more
- 17 about our business, think it's the, you know, walk
- 18 down to the corner, put 10 cents in a pay
- 19 telephone, hear it ding and make your call. It's
- 20 a lot more complex than that and that complexity
- 21 needs to be taken into consideration in terms of
- 22 rates.

201 1 So a few fun things to look at. store information on all calls. We have four 2 petabytes of storage. I'm an engineering guy so I kind of love to say words like that. What that's equivalent to is 80 million four-drawer filing cabinets worth of paper data. That's what it's 7 equivalent to, circles the globe twice if you stack all of the filing cabinets end-to-end-to-9 So we store lots of stuff. 10 One hundred and fifty tool-carrying technicians a big portion of our cost; 250 11 customer service people; 300 software development 12 13 people; 80,000 phones -- they're all ours -- we have installed; 5,000 video phones -- they're all 15 ours; 100 technical support people; 50 site administrators. 16 17 We complete 1.5 billion minutes of use 18 per year of traffic from inmates. We pay roughly 19 \$150 million dollars back to the facilities in 20 terms of commissions. It's my cost. We have 25 21 million lines of code that we have to maintain and

keep up and build on. We've got 24 million feet

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Workshop on Further Reform of Inmate Calling Services 07-09-2014 202 of fiber, coax and copper cables that we've got to 2 maintain. 3 We have cost of responding to subpoenas, warrants, testifying to chain of evidence 5 requests. That happens every single week. what we do and all of those things and more need to be reflected in terms of final rates to an end user customer. 9 Now to the chart over on the right. This is a little more interesting. I've grouped 10 11 these in terms of small, zero to 100; medium, 101 to 1,000; this is ADP, average daily population;

- 12
- and then large, 1001 to 20,000; and then more than 13
- 20,000. Think about it as underwear sizes, small, 14
- medium, large, extra large. You got to go beyond
- 16 that, I can't help you.
- 17 So we have average rates. That exclude
- 18 commissions. This is my cost, not other carriers'
- It's my cost. It excludes commissions 19 costs.
- because that's the way the FCC likes to take a 20
- 21 look at cost now. And ultimately, you see 28
- 22 cents for really small facilities up to a really

- 1 big facility, like 10 cents.
- 2 A really small facility for me, smallest
- 3 facility I have is Gross Point Park, Michigan, has
- 4 ADP of two with one telephone. That's my smallest
- 5 facility. They're in the 0 to 100 block. My
- 6 biggest facility is the Florida Department of
- 7 Corrections. It's 87,000 or 89,000 inmates.
- 8 The next column starts to tell you that
- 9 these numbers vary a lot and that's what the FCC
- 10 has to look at. Look at the --we'll go to the 101
- 11 to 1,000 for example. You can see it on the chart
- 12 or that, even though the average is 17, the range
- 13 for those facilities -- and there are lot of them;
- 14 there are 511 that I have so it's a pretty big
- 15 database -- goes from 8 cents a minute to 70 cents
- 16 a minute, so pretty big range.
- 17 So rates per minute show significant
- 18 variability. That needs -- and we all need to be
- 19 careful of that, not to price prisons or jails out
- 20 of the features that they need to do their jobs
- 21 and protect us. Decisions on rates are life and
- 22 death issues for victims, witnesses, inmates,

- 1 officers, and society. I don't' use that term
- 2 lightly. I mean it because I've seen it in the
- 3 hundreds of letters that we get from our
- 4 facilities.
- 5 So, we need to be thoughtful and
- 6 balanced and we need to have those kind of
- 7 approaches to setting rates that take safety and
- 8 security into consideration as well. Thank you.
- 9 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you very much.
- 10 Richard. Next and finally, Thomas Sweeney from
- 11 Global Tel Link.
- MR. SWEENEY: Thank you and thank the
- 13 Commission for inviting me and thank you for
- 14 putting me after Mr. Smith. That's a hard act to
- 15 follow.
- 16 I have little to add to what he said. I
- 17 think I have a number 86 feature and that would be
- 18 the type of inmate, whether you, you know -- and
- 19 I'll use the example I have a couple of counties
- 20 in Florida where I live. You have what I call the
- 21 city counties that have a lot of gang issues and
- 22 very severe type of criminal. And a few miles

- 1 down the road, you can have a beach community,
- 2 same size jail, where they have DWIs and some
- 3 public misconduct, totally different type. You've
- 4 got more investigators. You have more work
- 5 stations. You have more bandwidth, so there's --
- 6 you know, we've talked about the differences
- 7 between the departments of corrections facilities
- 8 in counties, but there's really a difference
- 9 between the county facilities, as Rick said.
- 10 I pride myself on being the old guy in
- 11 the industry. We've talk so much. Somebody
- 12 mentioned earlier the first inmate phones went in
- 13 in the early 70's. I quarantee you it was the
- 14 late 70's because I was there. I worked here in
- 15 the Bell Atlantic region, was involved with -- at
- 16 that time, they were coin phones in a lobby.
- 17 Inmates would sign up for a call and they were
- 18 walked from their jail out to the lobby, an
- 19 officer would sign who they were, how long they
- 20 talked, and who they talked to.
- 21 You fast forward to today. That's
- 22 pretty much what our systems do. But along the

- 1 way, I've seen unintended consequences. And I'm
- 2 glad to see that the whole industry here, we're
- 3 taking a step back and really studying what we
- 4 need to do because the first phones that went in
- 5 were live operator phones. That lasted about a
- 6 month before the central offices and the call
- 7 centers are yelling at me, Tom, you got to change
- 8 that because the inmates are calling up and asking
- 9 the operators what are you wearing, what time do
- 10 you get off, those type of things.
- We went to an automated operator and
- 12 quickly, the facilities are saying now that they
- 13 have free access and I don't listen to what they
- 14 say, we're having, you know, security issues
- 15 happen, victims are being harassed, witnesses are
- 16 being harassed. So we came up with recording.
- 17 The first recordings were reel-to-reel,
- 18 Dictaphone, very expensive. As things have gone
- 19 on, we've seen the unintended consequences.
- 20 So my request is just to continue what
- 21 you're doing with making sure we study and make a
- 22 good decision before make a final decision. Thank

		207
1	you.	
2		
3		
4	MODERATOR GUDE: Well, thank you very	
5	much. Thank you, everyone. Obviously, we're going	
6	to start some questions and I'll kick this off by	
7	saying what we have heard and what we've seen	
8	through rates in different facilities and	
9	different places is rates as low as I believe	
10	we keep getting back to New York being somewhere	
11	around 5 cents a minute and from there going up.	
12	We've seen, Rick, from on your chart, your cost	
13	information by size of facility and other things.	
14	What I'm trying to understand and	
15	reconcile is at the ICE facilities, was it 10	
16	cents a minute? They seem to be able to provide	
17	adequate security. They are very pleased with the	
18	security. Clearly, they believe their systems are	
19	absolutely what they need to provide security to	
20	the public. New York seems very happy at 5 cents	
21	a minute, able to do what they are doing.	
22	The question that we have is what makes	

- 1 up the difference between such low rates at
- 2 certain facilities providing adequate security and
- 3 in other places rates that are significantly
- 4 higher? Again, leave out the issue of
- 5 commissions; we can circle back to that. But
- 6 absent commissions, what drives those additional
- 7 costs that require significantly higher rates to
- 8 recover those costs -- to you Rick and then to
- 9 anyone else. I apologize.
- 10 MR. SMITH: You know, on the chart on
- 11 the right-hand side, we -- you know, our biggest
- 12 facility is 87,000 to 89,000 and for both of
- 13 those, I think you're talking about significantly
- 14 more ADP; if you put all the ICE facilities
- 15 together, significantly more ADP. But if you look
- 16 at the range -- don't look at the 10 cents, look
- 17 at the range. That just happens to be the
- 18 average. We go down to as low as 7 cents. So in
- 19 my mind, you know, a 5-cent facility or a 7-cent
- 20 facility, either one of those is a great rate.
- 21 I think the way you go from my 7 cents,
- 22 the low end of the range all the way up to 16

- 1 cents, the way you go up from 7 cents to 5 cents
- 2 is just more volume, more concentrated equipment,
- 3 better use of fixed assets, better use of people.
- 4 Those bigger facilities normally have a team of
- 5 our associates on site all of the time, not
- 6 assigned to anyone else, and you can make really
- 7 good use of those people versus you're serving
- 8 someplace in North Dakota where it may take a
- 9 technician four or five hours to drive to the
- 10 facility before they can put in any productive
- 11 time.
- 12 So I think it's just economies of scale
- 13 going from my averages of 15 to 18 cents or from 7
- 14 cents to 5 cents. But I think, you know,
- 15 hopefully, the FCC would be thrilled if on big
- 16 facilities we could average somewhere between 5
- 17 and 7 cents excluding commission costs.
- 18 So the short answer -- that's the long
- 19 answer. The short answer is I think it's just
- 20 economies of scale. The bigger the facility, the
- 21 lower the cost as long as you set commissions off
- 22 to the side.

		210
1	MODERATOR GUDE: Okay. So I'm just	
2	trying to get clarity on this. Then that does	
3	suggest size of facility makes a difference	
4	MR. SMITH: Yes.	
5	MODERATOR GUDE: in terms of cost.	
6	MR. SMITH: It absolutely does.	
7	MODERATOR GUDE: Okay.	
8	MR. SMITH: Now let me go on further.	
9	I've represented stuff there that's tiered. I	
10	hate tiering. I would never if I were you, I	
11	would never want to go to a tiering structure	
12	because of all the administrative problems	
13	associated with that, and which means that I truly	
14	don't believe any facilities would be not served.	
15	I think we, as an industry, would figure out a way	
16	to service them all in some way.	
17	But the administrative ease of having	
18	one rate like we did on the interstate side we	
19	could have tiered on the interstate side in the	
20	interim rates and we didn't. We implemented that.	
21	The price gap on the low end for the prepaid is 21	
22	cents and we're at 17 cents. No facility is above	

- 1 the Commission price gap of 21 cents, so we
- 2 average 17. And I'm not a fan of tiering just
- 3 because the administration because here's what I
- 4 would tell you all to do, and I'll tell you how
- 5 we'd look at the loopholes immediately.
- 6 We would go to a big facility like
- 7 Florida. If you did, for example, an ADP or a
- 8 minute of use kind of a tiering, we'd go to the
- 9 big facilities and say instead of one contract,
- 10 we're going to have 34, one per facility because
- 11 they're different, they have different
- 12 characteristics, they're in different parts of the
- 13 state so we migrate up to a higher rate. Within
- 14 the facilities, I'd start to look at booking areas
- 15 versus detention areas versus the women's area and
- 16 the men's area.
- 17 So we, as business people, are great in
- 18 terms of understanding the rules and, you know,
- 19 most people use the term "game" as like its
- 20 negative or illegal. I just view it as smart
- 21 business people will migrate to ways that will
- 22 allow them to make more money. So what I would

- 1 tell you thinking about only Securus, come up with
- 2 1,000 tiers and that would be great from my
- 3 perspective. But from sitting in your shoes, I
- 4 would say I need to keep this simple so I don't
- 5 get the guys and ladies to game it, so that's why
- 6 a single uniform rate, interstate-intrastate, both
- 7 together, makes a lot of sense to me from an
- 8 administrative perspective and I truly believe
- 9 after we stop the complaining, we can figure out a
- 10 way to make that kind of a structure work.
- 11 MODERATOR GUDE: Tom, so I'm not going
- 12 to let you off the hook.
- MR SWEENEY: Thanks, hard to expand on
- 14 that. Personally, I think to postalize it -- we
- 15 call postalize rates -- is at least easier to
- 16 explain to called parties, officers and inmates.
- 17 To answer your initial question of
- 18 what's the difference, it was mentioned earlier,
- 19 that (inaudible) New York, it's not really true.
- 20 UNISYS has a contract. We're a subcontractor so
- 21 not a personal knowledge of what's going on there.
- 22 I do caution that -- I do know there is some

- 1 grumbling through different trade shows that they
- 2 would like to have some technology they couldn't
- 3 get because they don't have commission to give the
- 4 dollars away. I think that will come up in the
- 5 next RFP.
- 6 So as I had mentioned earlier, be
- 7 careful of your unintended consequences. When you
- 8 drop to a floor -- I think you mentioned it
- 9 before, someone on the panel -- what's the
- 10 motivation for bringing new technology in there.
- 11 There will be service. We'll all do a good job.
- 12 In this market, I've said from the very beginning,
- 13 service is pass/fail. If you don't provide good
- 14 service, you're not -- no matter what commission
- 15 you offer, you're not going to get the business.
- 16 So I agree with they'll all be serviced. But we
- 17 have 2200 individual facilities. I guarantee you
- 18 there are 2200 ways they're all set up.
- 19 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Mr. Diggins would
- 20 you like to provide the counterpoint?
- 21 MR. DIGGINS: Absolutely. I
- 22 respectfully disagree with Mr. Smith in regards to

- 1 the tiering option from the jail administrator's
- 2 perspective. I believe that our costs are not the
- 3 same from small to medium to large jails and those
- 4 costs including running the inmate calling systems
- 5 are vastly different when you're talking about a
- 6 6-bed facility in Kettering, Ohio. It's not the
- 7 same as a 2300-bed jail in Denver, Colorado or a
- 8 21,000 bed capacity system as you have in LA
- 9 County, and so the economies of scale on the
- 10 return on the investment for the inmate calling
- 11 system obviously can't be paid back the same for
- 12 the same technology. We all want to have inmate
- 13 calling systems which record, which we can garner
- 14 data from, which we can provide to law
- 15 enforcement.
- And so for us, there is no way that you
- 17 can truthfully say from our end that a flat rate
- 18 across the board is palatable. And although it
- 19 may be easier for the providers when it comes to
- 20 the way that they have to run their business; for
- 21 us, it does not make sense. And I can tell you
- 22 that in speaking to jail administrators in those

- 1 small, medium, large and even mega jail systems,
- 2 all of who I know one or more of each, that they
- 3 would prefer to have a tiered system when it comes
- 4 to any rate structure which may be implemented for
- 5 intrastate calls.
- 6 MODERATOR GUDE: I want to just follow-
- 7 up a little bit on that. IN the Senator Stein
- 8 that what I'm hearing from Mr. Smith is the ease
- 9 would allow effectively averaging of rates across
- 10 different cost structures. Did I characterize
- 11 that correctly?
- 12 MR. SMITH: Yes. And if I could just
- 13 expand on my answer, I don't think I'd have a
- 14 conflict with Chief Diggins. If you set the price
- 15 cap rate high enough, it would allow -- and the
- 16 market would take care of ultimately lower rates.
- 17 If Denver was kind of a little higher than
- 18 average, if you set the rate high enough, we'd be
- 19 able to float it down so that we'd be able to
- 20 provide all of the enhancements that Chief Diggins
- 21 would need for bigger facilities. It would float
- 22 down because the market push it down in terms of

216 lower rates, higher -- to the highest ADP or the highest MOU facility. 3 So I'm not saying one rate for every facility in the United States. I'm saying set a cap and as long as it's high enough, trust the 5 market to force it down to suit all the size 7 facility needs. I don't know if that clarified it 8 all. 9 MODERATOR GUDE: Okay. I'm going to let 10 you follow-up -- if you had any --11 MR. DIGGINS: No. 12 MODERATOR GUDE: -- comments beyond 13 that. MR. DIGGINS: I think Mr. Smith cleared 14 15 it up. 16 MODERATOR GUDE: Okay. Thank you. Did 17 you have --18 MODERATOR BAKER: Well, yeah, I guess 19 I'd like to follow-up to that. So you're say8ing 20 that you set the rate cap high enough and even 21 though the cost may be lower at prisons, they should pay the higher rates anyway? 22

217 1 MR. SMITH: No. The market would take care of -- in the bidding process, the RFP process, the market would take care of bidding that particular contract lower. At least that's the way that we see it working. The reason why my bigger facilities have lower prices, which is what 7 is really reflected here, lower prices, lower costs, is that we bid it down lower. We do not have -- for example, when the FCC set the 10 interstate rate for us, because we're mostly prepared, to 21 cents, we had no -- very few 11 facilities at 21 cents. Most were below that. 12 We 13 actually average 17. So even though we could have went to 21 14 15 cents for them -- and we actually approached some 16 facilities and said, "The price cap's 21, you're 17 at 18; do you want to go to 21?" Their response, 18 which I think is the proper response is no, we 19 want to have lower rates where we are, as low --20 and you know, we also approached one of our bigger

contractors, Missouri, and asked them -- they were

at a 7 cent minute rate -- and ask them, you know,

21

- 1 you have movement to increase that. They weren't
- 2 interested in that. So they do care, because I
- 3 think it matters to them, about lower rates. So I
- 4 think the market would drive rates lower no matter
- 5 what the price cap is.
- 6 Sure, there are some facilities,
- 7 especially lower ones that would hang around at
- 8 the price cap level, but in my mind, set the price
- 9 cap high enough, let the market take care of lower
- 10 rates.
- 11 And kind of the fly in that ointment is
- 12 this, is commissions because you don't want to
- 13 have commissions driving rates higher just for the
- 14 sake of having rates higher and the highest
- 15 possible commissions. So that's why in my opening
- 16 comments I said commissions are a big deal. It's
- 17 a very big deal for the facilities. It's a very
- 18 big deal for us because we're kind of like the tax
- 19 collector in terms of commissions. It's a very
- 20 big deal for the FCC and the states. And I think
- 21 that has to be dealt with, not eliminated but
- 22 dealt with in a way so that it doesn't harm the

- 1 facilities.
- 2 And that's tough. That's why I think
- 3 this problem has been with us for 10 years. It's
- 4 just a tough problem to solve unless you just x
- 5 people out, and I don't think we ought to x anyone
- 6 out of this process. I think we ought to let
- 7 everyone have their piece and provide a lot of
- 8 good data to the FCC and together, I think we
- 9 ought to be able to -- maybe not all be thrilled
- 10 about the outcome but at least be okay with the
- 11 outcome.
- MR. BAKER: I'd like to follow-up on
- 13 that. We just mentioned rates. What do you think
- 14 about a comprehensive approach that includes rates
- 15 and fees and single-payment services? I mean
- 16 they're all part of one mechanism.
- 17 MR. SMITH: I'm absolutely fine with
- 18 that. You know, some companies have migrated to
- 19 more fees and less in rate, like rate per minute.
- 20 And some companies have migrated to put everything
- 21 in rate per minute. I think that needs to be
- 22 addressed. I think you're right on. I think

220 that's something that needs to be done. 1 2 MR. BAKER: Okay. 3 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Just moving a If we do all these wonderful reforms little bit. that we're speaking about, do any of our panelists 5 have opinions on appropriate transition periods to 7 enact those reforms maybe from the facility side, the provider side, the advocate side, flash cut, 9 phase in over three years, five years, provide 10 some suggestions? 11 MR. DIGGINS: Absolutely. The fact of the matter is the majority of the sheriffs and 12 13 jail administrators who are receiving these funds into inmate welfare accounts are using them for 15 the good of those inmates. Twenty years ago when 16 these services, these -- the technology was not 17 the same and perhaps the rate of return for those 18 funds was not the same. We didn't have programs 19 like mental health transition units inside of a 20 jail where someone with an AXIS-1 diagnosis who 21 has a bipolar mental health disorder coupled with 22 a drug addiction is getting help while they're in

- 1 our custody. We didn't have programs like that,
- 2 like recovery in a secure environment where
- 3 someone who has an addiction to drugs can get that
- 4 recovery while they're in our custody. And so
- 5 today those programs exist and if there was a
- 6 flash cut to say that they no longer could be
- 7 funded, then I would say that that would increase
- 8 recidivism rather than reduce it because those
- 9 folks will come back to our communities possibly
- 10 even worse than when they came to us and none of
- 11 us want that. We want to return them back to the
- 12 community better than when they came and so that's
- 13 why those programs are in place.
- I would say that an appropriate response
- 15 to that would be to let the contracts run out in a
- 16 three to five-year period and during that time, if
- 17 those contracts began to expire, that they be
- 18 renewed under these new guidelines. But to allow
- 19 those counties, those departments to let those
- 20 contracts run their course and to start them anew
- 21 would allow them to prepare for any eventual
- 22 change.

222 1 MR. FRIEDMAN: And I understand that 2 eliminating commissions or reducing rates significantly would pose a hardship for correctional facilities that have come to rely on the commission payments they get to fund these worthy programs. But prisoners' families have been suffering hardships for decades, and correctional facilities and service providers have been on notice that these are issues that need to be addressed for at least the past 10 years that 10 11 the Wright petition has been pending and certainly more recently, at least a year since roughly the 12 Commission introduced its order on rate caps and 13 reforms of the prison phone industry. 15 So this is not something that has been

- 16 done overnight. This is something that has been
- 17 done overnight. This is something that has been
- 18 done over a decade long period, and I think any
- 19 period of transition needs to be as minimal as
- 20 possible to ensure that reasonable rates,
- 21 reasonable fair rates are enacted across the board
- 22 for all facilities, intrastate and interstate and

- 1 that's what justice requires.
- 2 One other point on the fact that the
- 3 commission payments are funding these programs
- 4 such as mental health and substance abuse
- 5 treatment, those are inherent programs that need
- 6 to be funded through public funds. Prisoners'
- 7 families who overwhelmingly pay the commissions
- 8 should not be the people who pay for these types
- 9 of programs alone. This is a public service.
- 10 Jails provide a public service for the public good
- 11 and the public needs to fund it. So to the extent
- 12 that commission payments are used for these worthy
- 13 programs, that's great. But prisoners' families
- 14 are not the ones who should be footing the bill as
- 15 they have done for the past several decades.
- 16 MODERATOR GUDE: Elias, a response to
- 17 that, please?
- 18 MR. DIGGINS: Yes. Those funds are not
- 19 the only source for those programs. They assist
- 20 in us providing those programs but there are
- 21 literally tens of hundreds of programs which
- 22 inmates are involved in. Those programs that are

- 1 funded by these inmate welfare funds are a portion
- 2 of that.
- 3 There are lots of other things that jail
- 4 administrators do inside of the facilities which
- 5 come from other sources. And so I don't want to
- 6 paint the picture that is the only source for
- 7 this. If it was not available with the
- 8 supplemental for these, then the burden would be
- 9 on all of the taxpayers in addition to what they
- 10 already incur for those costs.
- 11 All of our money comes from tax revenue
- 12 for each county. The sheriff's departments are
- 13 not self sufficient. We are run by county
- 14 government which all of you know is based on tax
- 15 revenue.
- 16 And so everything that we do, we are
- 17 very responsible for when it comes to the revenue
- 18 that we receive from our county governments, and
- 19 any additional monies that we receive help us to
- 20 better prepare the inmates as they are released
- 21 back into society.
- MS. KAJSTURA: Sure, I just noticed

- 1 we're kind of getting caught up in what I think
- 2 might be a false dichotomy in terms of cutting
- 3 these prices and therefore losing revenue. And I
- 4 think this kind of goes to Mr. Smith's comment
- 5 before that, you know -- he says that Securus
- 6 doesn't make egregious profits but they might
- 7 charge egregious prices. And that, I think, shows
- 8 that there is something seriously broken with this
- 9 system. And I think it's important to look to
- 10 places like New York that have really cut their
- 11 rates, what they've seen and which has been
- 12 mentioned repeatedly through filing t50 the FCC
- 13 and in the earlier panels today is that as the
- 14 prices drop, the call volumes increase making up
- 15 significant portions of the money and of the
- 16 profits.
- 17 MR. FRIEDMANN: If I could just chime in
- 18 briefly. On the charge that Securus provided, and
- 19 I think it is important to note that these are
- 20 Securus's costs, average rates excluding
- 21 commissions. So obviously, the cost to the
- 22 consumer is going to be much higher than the

- 1 average cost of 15 to 18 cents per minute. So the
- 2 commissions add a significant amount onto this.
- I also note that this range, if you look
- 4 at the range of rates, excluding commissions, it's
- 5 from 7 cents a minute to a \$1.22 a minute. That
- 6 means at some facilities, the cost to Securus of
- 7 providing that call ranges from about \$1.40 for a
- 8 20-minute call to over \$24.00 for a 20-minute call
- 9 based on its own data, excluding commissions. So
- 10 that vast range in there is something that needs
- 11 to be considered.
- 12 Certainly, there might be differences in
- 13 providing services, small versus large facilities,
- 14 but when 5the cost to Securus for a 20-minute call
- 15 is \$24.00, then I think questions need to be asked
- 16 and answered.
- 17 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: I just had a
- 18 question, Mr. Smith, on this chart. Aleks just
- 19 noted the two middle columns say "rates" and the
- 20 yellow part down at the bottom refers to "costs."
- 21 Just --
- 22 MR. SMITH: I used them interchangeable.

227 As part of my cost, I have a reasonable rate of return, weighted average cost to capital cost of equity cost. I go through all of that when I determine those. MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Okay, thank you. 5 6 MR. SMITH: You're welcome. 7 MODERATOR GUDE: Darrell. 8 MODERATOR BAKER: Mr. Smith and Mr. 9 Sweeney, I think I heard you correctly in that you both agree that there needs to be a comprehensive 10 11 approach that looks at rates, fees and single payment services. Would that be correct that you 12 13 all agree with that? 14 MR. SMITH: Yes. 15 MODERATOR BAKER: Okay. What then do you think is -- do you see as the ICS providers' 17 obligation with respect to making cost data 18 available to regulators to accomplish that 19 purpose? What level of transparency should there 20 be? 21 MR. SMITH: Darrell, we provided our first cost study. We call it kind of the woods 22

- 1 (ph) cost study and we spearheaded that as part of
- 2 the industry and we provided that to the FCC back
- 3 in 2008-2009 timeframe so we gave cost data then.
- 4 It was, you know, a relatively high-level study
- 5 but it was done by someone on the outside of the
- 6 company. We provided a more detailed analysis
- 7 2012-2013 and that was a name that begins with
- 8 "S". We used that consultant and I can't
- 9 pronounce it but we provided data then.
- 10 We're presently doing what I would call
- 11 maybe good, better, the best cost study that we've
- 12 ever done. We're using -- first of all, its' the
- 13 most expensive cost study we've ever done. It
- 14 will cost us about \$400,000.00. We will submit it
- 15 to the FCC on July 17th. We're working really
- 16 hard to meet their original date. We're trying to
- 17 provide everything that the FCC put out in terms
- 18 of requirements on the cost study and so that
- 19 should be available on the 17th.
- There will always be some areas that
- 21 aware blacked out but we're going to try to
- 22 minimize that this time so we can be as

229 transparent as we possibly can. It'll be, you know, rates per minute. It'll be the fees that we charge. It'll be the cost base of the fees that we charge. So that will be our most significant effort done by what I'd call probably the best accounting/economic analysis firm that we know of 7 in the industry, FTI consulting. And like I said, that should be available shortly. 9 I think -- when you see it, I think you'll really -- you may not agree with it but I 10 11 think you'll really like it. But there are numbers that are consistent with -- not exactly 12 because this -- note, this is kind of like our 13 marketing database. They use kind the account 15 database, quote, the real numbers and so they'll be close to all of the numbers there in that first 17 -- or the first column over from ADP.

- I think -- my prediction is you'll at it
- 19 and you'll say, "This is really pretty good."
- 20 Hopefully, that's what you'll say.
- MR. BAKER: Will you make that economist
- 22 available for questioning and for discovery?

1	MR. SMITH: Yes, yes. That's	230
2	MR. BAKER: Okay.	
3	MR. SMITH: that will be part of	
4	their work and they've done multiple they have	
5	a history of doing cost studies so, you know,	
6	doing that before the FCC and states is not unique	
7	for them.	
8	MR. BAKER: Okay.	
9	MR. SMITH: And I know you're a tough	
10	guy to please but we're going to try to please	
11	you.	
12	MR. BAKER: Thank you.	
13	MR. SMITH: You're welcome.	
14	MR SWEENEY: The difference between the	
15	CEO and the Salves VP is I don't have all those	
16	figures at my fingertips difference between CEO	
17	math and sales math but understand that in the	
18	past, although we you know, we have contracts	
19	for our costs and things, we didn't keep that. We	
20	weren't required to so I think we're in the same	
21	position. We are now looking at internally of	
22	people doing cost analysis and we will provide the	

231 same thing. 1 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Kevin, just from 2 ICE, a question. We haven't heard much about international rates on our panels today, and hopefully just you could shed some light, fill in a little bit of a whole for us. Can you discuss the rates that ICE has for international calling and your opinion, if you can provide it, on whether the Commission should regulate those 10 international rates? 11 MR. LANDY: Sure. Because of the nature of our population, of course, rates for 12 13 international telephone calls is incredibly important, both that the rates be reasonable but 14 15 also that we can present the rate structure to detainees in a way that is uniform and simple to 17 understand. Currently, ICE detainees are charged 18 a uniform rate of 15 cents -- I mentioned this 19 earlier -- per minute for direct connections to 20 landlines to any country and 35 cents for 21 connections to mobile phones. As a point of comparison, I just last 22

- 1 night looked up what I would be paying on my own
- 2 phone plan and also the competing provider for
- 3 where I live, having even -- notwithstanding the
- 4 monthly rate that I pay for that phone service,
- 5 looking at the countries where we have the
- 6 greatest number of detainees, Guatemala, Costa
- 7 Rica, Honduras and El Salvador, the international
- 8 rates that I would be paying were higher for
- 9 direct calls to landlines and for many other
- 10 countries where we have detainees, quite a bit
- 11 higher, the rates that I'd be calling if I didn't
- 12 have an international plan for which I'd be paying
- 13 an extra \$20.00 a month.
- 14 So far this fiscal year, we have
- 15 detained people from 200 different countries and
- 16 that number will continue to grow. And in our
- 17 prior contract, the rate structure was a list of
- 18 250 countries and 250 rates, and there is no -- I
- 19 don't -- I think it's hard to quarantee that
- 20 detainees at every housing unit in all of our
- 21 facilities are going to understand what the rates
- 22 are going to be when they place that call. So

- 1 having that uniformity is really important.
- I think anyone who's an immigrant in
- 3 this country, regardless of whether or not they're
- 4 in ICE custody, if they find themselves in
- 5 custody, obviously international calls could be
- 6 very important to them. For us in particular, for
- 7 many of our detainees, all of their family members
- 8 and loved ones are in their home countries.
- 9 Maintaining detainees' morale, allowing them to
- 10 maintain that relationship is incredibly
- 11 important. Even from a pragmatic perspective, a
- 12 number of our detainees are aware that they're
- 13 going to be removed back to their home countries
- 14 and need to make appropriate arrangements for
- 15 their departure. So that's also a humanitarian
- 16 perspective but from the agency's perspective,
- 17 it's pragmatic as well. So low rates, uniform
- 18 rates, and I can't make recommendations to the FCC
- 19 but those are factors that are important to us.
- 20 MODERATOR GUDE: To follow-up on that
- 21 just to make sure, those international calls have
- 22 all of your security bells and whistles associated

234 with those as well, right? 2 MR. LANDY: Yes. 3 MODERATOR GUDE: Okay. As we're running towards the end, I just wanted to give everyone on the panel an opportunity. Many of you or I think most of you who have been able to sit through the other two panels heard comments on what the impacts are or have been or have not been with 9 respect to intrastate services in sort of post the 10 FCC's interstate rules that came out, the interim 11 rules that came out last year and also the second panel which was focused on ancillary charges. 12 wanted to give you all an opportunity to have any 13 comments, share your thoughts, if there was 15 anything in there you felt you disagreed with, 16 agreed with, had other thoughts on, give you all 17 the opportunity. 18 MR. DIGGINS: 19'll jump in. 19 MODERATOR GUDE: Please. 20 MR. DIGGINS: First of all, I think I 21 didn't -- I forgot to thank the FCC for allowing 22 law enforcement to be at the table. Being the

- 1 only law enforcement officer who has been a part
- 2 of these panels has been an honor and we are
- 3 partners in this conversation and hope to stay at
- 4 the table to have a fair, just, and reasonable
- 5 response to this issue which is very important to
- 6 us.
- 7 There was a comment made about prisons
- 8 and jails being the same based upon the
- 9 populations. I just want to clarify that that is
- 10 not true. We are absolutely different. When you
- 11 talk about a facility, a prison facility that has
- 12 2200 inmates, generally they're there for a very
- 13 long time; some of them for a short stint for 5 to
- 14 10 years; some of them may be there for the rest
- 15 of their lives. And so an inmate calling system
- 16 in that regard is a little bit different than a
- 17 facility of our size that may have 2200 beds but
- 18 processes 37,000 people per year for whom each we
- 19 have to set up a calling profile.
- 20 And so it's not an apples to apples
- 21 comparison when it comes to prisons and jails. We
- 22 hope to continue to make that argument not just

236 here but in other venues. But the conversation regarding jails should come from jail folk and we're more than happy as an organization to continue to represent that. 5 MODERATOR GUDE: I can say we very much appreciate your coming here and we hope that you 6 7 can continue to be involved. We appreciate that. Our efforts will be benefitted by that. 9 MR. DIGGINS: Thank you. 10 MODERATOR GUDE: Alex. 11 MR. FRIEDMANN: Thank you. Just a couple comments. I think it's important to 12 13 realize that although HRDC advocates for prisoners and their families, you know, nobody wants to see 15 rates so low that companies are not able to 16 generate profit and maintain their services. 17 know, it doesn't benefit anybody if companies 18 cannot meet the rates and they're doing below cost 19 business and they go out of business and inmates 20 can't make phone calls to their families. 21 So when we talk about having just, fair, 22 and reasonable rates, that's exactly what we mean.

- 1 We don't mean unfair rates that are unfair to the
- 2 companies. We also don't mean rates that are so
- 3 high that they're unfair to prisoners' families.
- 4 There has to be a balance there. In order to have
- 5 that balance, you do have to have the data. You
- 6 have to have important cost data that allows you
- 7 to find that balance between reasonable rates on
- 8 both sides.
- 9 So Mr. Smith, when he discussed some of
- 10 Securus's finances, you know, he pointed out that
- 11 other companies have higher profit margins such as
- 12 10 percent with AT&T or 14 percent with Verizon.
- 13 The difference is if I'm doing business with a
- 14 company and I don't like their profit margin, I'll
- 15 just find another company. I don't like AT&T,
- 16 I'll go to Verizon. If I don't go Verizon, I'll
- 17 go with somebody else. I don't like my cell phone
- 18 plan, I'll change it form T-Mobile to Boost. But
- 19 people in prison and their families who
- 20 overwhelmingly pay for the cost of their calls
- 21 don't have that choice. They can't simply switch
- 22 from one carrier to another because there are

- 1 basically monopolies on prison and jail phone
- 2 services once the company has the contract.
- 3 And although Securus might have a very
- 4 low, say, 1.4 percent net profit, we still don't
- 5 really know what that profit is because that data
- 6 is not made publicly available in terms of how
- 7 much they're actually making until that cost data
- 8 is entered into the record.
- 9 One comment that was made by Mr. Smith
- 10 was that the -- we should trust the market to
- 11 force the prices down. In other words, if we just
- 12 trust the competitive nature of the market, then
- 13 things will resolve down to a certain level that's
- 14 fair and just. But competition only works if the
- 15 nature of the contracts is to benefit the
- 16 consumers. So long as we have inmate service
- 17 contracts for phone services that are based on the
- 18 highest commission percentage rather than the
- 19 lowest cost to the consumer, the competitive
- 20 forces don't work because they're non-existent.
- 21 Thank you.
- MS. KAJSTURA: I actually wanted to

- 1 reply to the comment about the size of the
- 2 facility. So yeah, there are some facilities that
- 3 have tremendous churn and annually about 12
- 4 million people cycle through jails and, you know,
- 5 that's a number that's problematic for many
- 6 reasons. But there are states where -- I think
- 7 Louisiana, over 50 percent of the population in
- 8 jails is serving out their sentence. They're just
- 9 happened to be placed inside of a jail instead of
- 10 a prison. So just -- it just doesn't serve as a
- 11 clear-cut line is all I was saying.
- 12 MR. LANDY: I would just like thank the
- 13 FCC for all the tremendous work it's been doing in
- 14 this area. I've spoken about our DTS contract
- 15 where we have, obviously, greater control over
- 16 rates and services. But in my capacity conducting
- 17 -- or collaborating on detention reform
- 18 initiatives, information is also incredibly
- 19 important. And we have a lot of facilities where
- 20 we don't have our DTS contract. There are jails
- 21 and contract-operated facilities which are very
- 22 important partners to us, and I don't want to

- 1 suggest that, you know, I understand at all what
- 2 the pressures are in their very different systems.
- 3 But the information that the FCC is
- 4 currently collecting is going to be very helpful
- 5 to us, because having more information about
- 6 facilities that we use, it just allows us to
- 7 better understand basically what we're paying for
- 8 and what the situation of all of our detainees is.
- 9 So thank you very much.
- 10 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you. Rick.
- 11 MR. SMITH: A couple points. Inter
- 12 equals intra, I've said that to the Commission
- 13 before. I think that the rates ultimately and
- 14 what you do, they should be very similar on the
- 15 interstate state side and on the intrastate side.
- 16 I think commissions is the elephant in
- 17 the room. It represents roughly 50 percent of our
- 18 cost structure and we have built a model as an
- 19 industry where the facilities that we serve rely
- 20 on those commissions. And I don't think it's fair
- 21 to pull that away without some kind of support
- 22 mechanism in its place, whether that's a

- 1 transition period or it's a cap on commissions but
- 2 it isn't fair to the facilities that have
- 3 participated in this process where we just kind
- 4 of, you know, forget commissions and say it can't
- 5 be done anymore. That's what we've done on the
- 6 interstate side so far and it's -- I think it's
- 7 worked to a great degree for us because it only
- 8 represented 10 percent of total commissions. So
- 9 you can kind of pull that down a little bit and
- 10 facilities aren't gutted in terms of the
- 11 commission number. But I think commissions is an
- 12 issue that needs to be dealt with in the open, in
- 13 an economic kind of way.
- 14 I absolutely agree with Alex Friedmann
- 15 and I thought I make this part of my comments that
- 16 -- and I didn't think I'd ever agree with you on
- 17 anything -- but I do agree on the notion of
- 18 competition works as long as you can kind of deal
- 19 with commissions in some because that's the part
- 20 of the equation that makes it not work, although
- 21 where there are low commissions or capped
- 22 commissions, I have seen many facilities, for the

- 1 good of inmates and friends and family members,
- 2 decide contracts based on who can provide -- and
- 3 I'm sure you, too, have -- who can give me the
- 4 lowest possible rate; you know, I care about
- 5 commissions and you can give me 25 percent, but
- 6 who -- the firm that can give me the lowest
- 7 possible rate for inmates and friends and family
- 8 members wins. And that's an okay model. We can
- 9 participate in that model okay but it comes back
- 10 to it is a very tough issue for you and for the
- 11 states.
- 12 I think it should be dealt with on a,
- 13 quote, a fair way. I love that term because you
- 14 have to be fair to all the people who've built
- 15 this business model over the last 20 years, and
- 16 you got one tough job trying to do that.
- 17 MODERATOR GUDE: Thank you. Thomas, you
- 18 have the last word.
- 19 MR SWEENEY: Yeah, just I echo what Mr.
- 20 Friedmann said, fair and reasonable. I like that.
- 21 And let's make sure we take our time and get to
- 22 the place where it works for everyone.

243 1 MODERATOR GUDE: All right. Thank you, 2 everyone. This was a great panel. I think we got a lot out of this. I hope you all will continue to stay involved as the process continues. Your input is critical. Thank you. 5 6 (Applause.) 7 (Whereupon, off the record for a brief 8 recess.) 9 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: (Inaudible) forms of 10 communications in correctional settings beyond the 11 traditional wireline telephone call. 12 And my name is Lynne Engledow. Assistant Division Chief in the Pricing Policy 13 Division of the Bureau and David Zesiger, Senior 15 Counsel in the Division. We will just go 16 alphabetically down the line and start with Mr. 17 Byrne. 18 MR. BYRNE: Thank you. I want to thank 19 the FCC for allowing me to be a part of this and 20 talk about new technologies. And as this workshop 21 is focused on inmate calling services and this 22 panel is specifically targeted to new

- 1 technologies, I'd like to focus my opening
- 2 comments on a new solution to the problem of
- 3 contraband cell phones that also provides enhanced
- 4 telephone access to detainees and their families.
- 5 The first payphone was installed in
- 6 Hartford, Connecticut in a bank in 1889. The
- 7 first payphone in jail, as we heard earlier,
- 8 probably in the 70's. Ironically, the same
- 9 device, admittedly with very sophisticated back-
- 10 end controls is still being used in prisons and
- 11 jails around the world 125 years later. Yet when
- 12 was the last time you personally used a pay phone?
- 13 The reason for this are cell phones.
- 14 As many of you may be aware, contraband
- 15 cell phones are a significant issue in prisons and
- 16 jails across the country and indeed around the
- 17 world. Over 15,000 were confiscated in California
- 18 alone in 2012. In fact, Georgia Department of
- 19 Corrections Commissioner Brian Owens has stated
- 20 illegal cell phone use in Georgia prisons has
- 21 developed to epidemic proportions and is now the
- 22 system's greatest safety threat. There is no

- 1 doubt that the use of unrestricted cell phones in
- 2 prisons is a serious security risk and that some
- 3 of it is for criminal use and criminal activity.
- 4 However, it has been shown that the vast
- 5 majority of contraband cell phone use is by
- 6 detainees seeking more frequent and affordable
- 7 interaction with family and loved ones,
- 8 interaction that is now severely restricted by the
- 9 limited number and shared use of prison pay
- 10 phones. We believe that contraband cell ph ones
- 11 are a problem of both and supply and demand. Due
- 12 to the demand for the cell phones in prison, there
- 13 is an active and highly lucrative pipeline of
- 14 supply. Most prison administrations have focused
- 15 on restricting the supply of contraband cell
- 16 phones through detection, managed access jamming,
- 17 and search. However, like the problem of drug
- 18 smuggling, without addressing the demand for
- 19 contraband, the problem will never be solved.
- 20 We have developed a solution called
- 21 meshDetect which helps to reduce the demand for
- 22 contraband cell phones by siphoning off the

- 1 legitimate desire for more frequent telephone
- 2 access between detainees and their loved ones.
- 3 meshDetect is a secure prison cell phone solution
- 4 that gives detainees highly customized cell phones
- 5 with all the security and control features of
- 6 prison payphones. This allows those detainees
- 7 whose only desire is for legitimate, non-criminal
- 8 contact with families to use wireless technology
- 9 safely and securely. By siphoning off and co-
- 10 opting this non-criminal wireless usage, we
- 11 significantly reduce the overall demand for
- 12 contraband cell phones and therefore the
- 13 profitability for those smuggling these devices.
- 14 Less financial reward for cell phone smugglers
- 15 changes the risk-reward equation and makes it much
- 16 less appealing given the high personal and
- 17 professional risk for those who are caught
- 18 smuggling in cell phones.
- 19 In addition to reducing the demand for
- 20 and therefore the supply of contraband cell
- 21 phones, enhanced access to telecommunication
- 22 services has proven significant additional

- 1 benefits of reducing recidivism, improving
- 2 detainee behavior, and increasing officer safety.
- 3 Eventually, all technology trends reach the prison
- 4 walls. In fact, the Department of Justice
- 5 recently mandated that the federal Bureau of
- 6 Prison Halfway House detainees be given controlled
- 7 access to cell phones to facilitate communication
- 8 with potential employers and family. With the
- 9 meshDetect, all deserving detainees can benefit
- 10 from wireless technology safely and securely.
- 11 Thank you.
- 12 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Mr. Gainsboro.
- 13 MR. GAINSBORO: Thank you. I just want
- 14 to begin very briefly by saying that I think the
- 15 FCC has done an excellent job in tackling a really
- 16 tough problem and I want to thank the FCC for
- 17 inviting me to speak today. So thank you, guys.
- 18 Keep up the good work.
- 19 The inmate telephone provides an
- 20 important and critical link to keep inmates in
- 21 contact with their friends and families. The
- 22 transition from freedom to confinement is a

- 1 challenging one. Unfortunately, the same inmate
- 2 phone is also used to threaten and harm the
- 3 public. Documented cases of such crimes include
- 4 threatening, intimidating, blackmailing and
- 5 murdering crime victims as well as jurors,
- 6 witnesses, informants, public servants and others.
- 7 One important and proven technology that
- 8 has provided significant public safety protection
- 9 for inmate calling systems is voice biometrics.
- 10 This technology was first deployed in the
- 11 corrections industry in the early 1990's and was
- 12 referred to as pre-call validation. These systems
- 13 required inmates to speak a specific pass phrase
- 14 during an enrollment process that was then stored
- 15 in a voice print database. In order for an inmate
- 16 to place call, the inmate would have to enter a
- 17 PIN and then say their specific pass phrase for
- 18 their call to be released to the telephone
- 19 network.
- In 2007, a new continuous voice
- 21 biometric identification technology referred to as
- 22 CVI was first launched in the corrections

- 1 industry. This technology developed originally
- 2 for the U.S. Department of Defense eliminated the
- 3 need for the inmate to say a specific pass phrase
- 4 and simply required a non word- specific 45 second
- 5 sample of inmate speech. A model of the inmate's
- 6 voice was created and stored in a voice-matching
- 7 database. The voice model was then subsequently
- 8 compared to each phone call placed from the
- 9 correctional facility.
- 10 CVI offered significant benefits over
- 11 the earlier 1990's pass phrase validation
- 12 technology because any unauthorized inmate
- 13 entering the phone conversation at any time could
- 14 be automatically identified as well.
- 15 Prior to the advent of CVI, the industry
- 16 had no way to quantify the amount of PIN sharing
- 17 and stealing that was going on in correctional
- 18 facilities. As a result of the accuracy and
- 19 capabilities of the newer CVI technology, a test
- 20 was run on over 50 million inmate phone calls and
- 21 included correctional agencies with as few as 75
- 22 inmates all the way up to an agency that had more

250 than 13,000 inmates. The test revealed that greater than one out of every 15 phone calls placed by inmates was either a PIN misused or a PIN abused phone call. Once these calls could be automatically 5 identified, call reviewers could spend their time 6 7 just reviewing PIN abused calls. When inmates misuse or abuse PINs, there is a high correlation with criminal activities and correctional agency 10 policy violations. 11 The future of CVI for protecting the public, inmates, and correctional staff for 12 regular phone calls, video calling, Voice Over IP 13 calling, and cellular phone calls is very 14 15 promising. Under development is an entirely new generation of technology designed to further 16 17 protect the public. These developments include a 18 greater ability to zero in on the inmate phone 19 calls that are most likely to be involved in 20 criminal calling activities. 21 During recent beta tests of this new 22 improved and expanded technology at the New

- 1 Hampshire Department of Corrections, the system
- 2 was able to identify within seconds a criminal
- 3 phone call where one inmate ordered a hit on
- 4 another inmate. As a result, the agency was able
- 5 to have knowledge of the planned assault
- 6 significantly before the assault took place. The
- 7 same beta test system has identified hundreds of
- 8 similar types of calls. These calls have included
- 9 attempts to circumvent the justice system and
- 10 other criminal actions. In another important
- 11 safety- related detection, the system identified
- 12 an inmate who was arranging with an outside party
- 13 for drugs and other contraband to be smuggled into
- 14 the facility. Correctional staff used the system's
- 15 detection information to intercept the contraband
- 16 and the co-conspirator was arrested.
- 17 As inmate phone rates decline, inmates
- 18 will begin making more phone calls. The challenge
- 19 for the correctional agency and the industry will
- 20 be to find those calls where inmates are
- 21 threatening or attempting to harm the public. Due
- 22 to the fact that in excess of 20 percent of all

252 inmate PINs are misused or abused and that these inappropriate uses are highly correlated with threats and harm to the public safety, it is in the greater public interest to have the cost of these technological safeguards be included in the cost of providing inmate phone service. 7 In closing, continuous voice identification is one technology that will continue to offer an economically feasible method 10 of decreasing the risk of inmate calling to the 11 public, other inmates, and correctional staff while still allowing the inmate to communicate 12 13 with his friends and family. 14 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Mr. Gongaware. 15 MR. GONGAWARE: First, I'd like to thank the FCC for organizing and hosting this workshop, 16 17 and I'd like to thank them for allowing me to 18 talk. 19 My name is Grant Gongaware. I am the 20 founding engineer at Telmate and currently Telmate's chief architect. I have been 21

responsible for much of Telmate's software

- 1 development, hardware planning, and networking
- 2 design. I would like to spend a couple of minutes
- 3 discussing Telmate's development and
- 4 implementation of new technologies. Then I'd like
- 5 to spend a few minutes discussing the challenges
- 6 we have and anticipating the costs associated with
- 7 those new technologies.
- 8 First, the development and
- 9 implementation.: Telmate attributes most of its
- 10 success to the engineering of new VOIP and
- 11 broadband technologies and our freedom to
- 12 introduce these to and compete in the
- 13 ICS marketplace. From a hardware
- 14 perspective, we maintain three primary platforms:
- 15 One, a VOIP phone system which provides telephony
- 16 service; two, shared media stations which operate
- 17 over broadband and wireless networks; and three,
- 18 shared tablet computers which also operate over
- 19 broadband and wireless networks. Of these, I
- 20 think the media stations and the tablets offer the
- 21 most potential.
- 22 When available, inmates can use shared

- 1 stations and tablets to access what we refer to as
- 2 either self-contained or supervised services.
- 3 Self-contained services are one-sided. Those
- 4 include games, streaming music, education, and law
- 5 library tools, commissary ordering, and the Cloud
- 6 storage needed to support these offerings.
- 7 Supervised services are multi-sided.
- 8 Those include private text-based messaging
- 9 systems, photo sharing, internet browsing and
- 10 video visits. Obviously, supervised services
- 11 require a higher level of security because inmates
- 12 can use them to send unsolicited communications,
- 13 and all supervised services therefore require
- 14 manual review cues and automated biometrics. They
- 15 also require filtering, logging, tracking,
- 16 storage, searchability, and live access.
- We offer new technologies through
- 18 innovative self-contained and supervised broadband
- 19 services. On the self-contained side, we are
- 20 developing access points for digital goods like
- 21 music albums, game upgrades and videos. We are
- 22 leading the push to Deleon and implement education

- 1 and e-learning tools. In fact, we are particularly
- 2 excited about a pilot program at Oregon DOC for a
- 3 learning lab. When complete, Oregon DOC inmates
- 4 will enjoy \$270,000.00 in new computing equipment
- 5 which will benefit inmates immediately. We are
- 6 also offering Cloud storage solutions for storing
- 7 music, contacts, games, and documents which will
- 8 remain available to the inmate after their
- 9 release.
- 10 On the supervised service side, we offer
- 11 social media and video visitation services. Some
- 12 of these services are cutting edge and push the
- 13 comfortable limits of hardware and software.
- 14 Those services are also making contact management
- 15 particularly important. We are helping inmates
- 16 safely access existing content managing services
- 17 like Facebook, Yahoo, Google, and (Inaudible) and
- 18 Yahoo address books so they can stay connected
- 19 with friends and family.
- This brings me to my second point.
- 21 Telmate and the rest of the industry experience
- 22 huge challenges in anticipating and funding costs

- 1 associated with developing, implementing, and
- 2 maintaining these new systems and services. I'll
- 3 give three reasons: First, inmates find ways to
- 4 misuse new product offerings adding hidden costs
- 5 and increasing the cost of providing even the most
- 6 basic services, for example, paperless commissary
- 7 ordering. At some institutions, we offer
- 8 paperless facilities where inmates can order
- 9 commissary, submit other requests and grievances
- 10 electronically. It sounds simple but inmates
- 11 found a way to misuse the commissary ordering
- 12 system as a communications back channel. We have
- 13 since spent more time and resources adding
- 14 safeguards to the commissary ordering system than
- 15 we did building the original service itself just
- 16 to prevent abuses.
- 17 The same is true about inmate calendars
- 18 where calendars were being used as a back channel
- 19 and for profile photos that we use in our social
- 20 media program where rapidly-changing profile
- 21 pictures were misused as a communication device.
- These simple examples highlight how

- 1 difficult and time-consuming and costly it is to
- 2 engineer and innovate communication tools among
- 3 inmate populations.
- 4 A second reason that we face
- 5 difficulties funding often significant new
- 6 technology costs are storage and maintenance costs
- 7 for both self-contained and supervised services.
- 8 We must maintain a record of these service
- 9 offerings online often for years or decades which
- 10 is expensive.
- 11 Finally, a third difficulty we face in
- 12 anticipating changing costs of regulatory
- 13 compliance. To date, Telmate has been successful
- 14 in large part because it's able to design,
- 15 implement, and deploy new and better products
- 16 quickly. But while it's relatively small size and
- 17 advanced innovative product offerings have allowed
- 18 Telmate to compete successfully in the ICS market,
- 19 complicated and changing regulatory systems
- 20 jeopardize Telmate's ability to innovate. We fear
- 21 that forcing more attention towards the back
- 22 office will hinder our ability to innovate at the

- 1 forefront at a time when breakthroughs in
- 2 technologies are permitting market forces to
- 3 improve the price and service of inmate
- 4 communications.
- 5 For these reasons, the FCC should
- 6 continue to let ICS providers innovate freely in
- 7 the broadband space where innovation can most
- 8 improve inmate lives and where market forces have
- 9 encouraged companies like Telmate to introduce new
- 10 technology at lower prices. Thank you.
- 11 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Thank you. Mr.
- 12 Moore.
- MR. MOORE: Thank you. I'd also like to
- 14 thank the FCC for inviting us here.
- 15 And I'll talk a little bit about the
- 16 evolution of inmate communications. And it's
- 17 always been a balance between convenience,
- 18 contact, and public safety starting with letters
- 19 and face-to-face visits evolving to standard
- 20 payphones that allowed an additional level of
- 21 contact and convenience moving to coinless collect
- 22 only phones when inmates were no longer allowed to

259 have coins, but these were phones with no 2 security. 3 And while it was focused early on in providing more contact and more convenience, each time we did that, as Mr. Gongaware said, it created potential security hold that had to be 7 filled. Each time you offer something new, you have to take into account the ways in which it may be misused which is how we got to inmate calling 10 systems with basic call controls, things like call 11 supervision, selective recording, PINs, allowed call lists, investigative features, these were 12 13 things that were a benefit to public safety and also security. 14 15 From there we moved to things like voicemail, voice biometrics, key word search, 17 transcription. These were things that allowed 18 both more contact. They improved inmate safety, I 19 think as Mr. Gainsboro explained, in regards to 20 the voice biometrics, an inmate trying to protect 21 their PIN number and the way voice biometrics 22 allows them to do that and from there, going to

- 1 things like intelligence tools, data analytics,
- 2 location-based services, geo-fencing and
- 3 contraband cell phone control; again, focused on
- 4 public safety to reel in the beast, to get things
- 5 back under control for the products that we had
- 6 deployed.
- 7 Where we see things going now: wall-
- 8 mounted, multi-service kiosks. So we heard about
- 9 the need for video calls for inmates with
- 10 disabilities. We've seen a desire for video
- 11 visitation, for other inmate services, for
- 12 programs, for educational content.
- One of the things that I want to point
- 14 out is those are needs and those things are not
- 15 something that is at a minimum cost to do the
- 16 research and development. It is the inmate
- 17 telephone providers that bear the cost of the
- 18 development for the kiosk, to put that device on
- 19 the wall, to do the -- to provide the additional
- 20 bandwidth, to develop and do the software
- 21 development research for the applications that go
- 22 in that device, for the additional maintenance and

261 support to support the device once it's on the 2 wall. And these are all a benefit to the 3 incarcerated individual and to their friends and It's more contact, it's better contact the contact that you get from a video visit versus what you would get from a simple telephone call or an email. And while it is better contact, email can be an effective tool in that you can get more 10 frequent contact perhaps at a lower cost. 11 Where we see the market going from there is to secure hand-held, multi-service devices as 12 13 Mr. Gongaware said. You know, how do you then take that thing off the wall and put it in the 15 hands of someone so they can use it at their convenience. So you again focus on more contact, 17 more convenience. We believe that that would 18 reduce recidivism if you can improve that contact. 19 But it goes back to on one hand, while we want to 20 do that, the other hand is how do you actually pay 21 for that; how do you make that thing happen so

that you can give that inmate that benefit. And

- 1 there are a number of benefits to be had there.
- 2 And so that's a thing that we continue to explore.
- 3 Thank you.
- 4 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: I'll start off the
- 5 questions and welcome any questions from the web
- 6 or the room or Twitter.
- 7 Just curious about the RFP process or
- 8 processes with the correctional facilities. Are
- 9 you seeing requests for these types of services in
- 10 the RFPs or is it more of you all educating
- 11 correctional facilities as to your offerings? How
- 12 well have they been embraced by the correctional
- 13 institutions? Whoever wants to take that?
- 14 MR. MOORE: I would say it depends. You
- 15 know, as we've talked about facilities are very
- 16 different, their needs are very different, also
- 17 their education and knowledge of what's available
- 18 to them is very different. So you've got some
- 19 customers that are at every trade show. They read
- 20 technology magazines. They think about how could
- 21 you take a thing that's in the consumer market and
- 22 bring that into the inmate market. They consult

- 1 with us about what is the best way to do that.
- 2 You've got others that keep a more simple approach
- 3 in regards to how they run a facility and may not
- 4 be aware.
- 5 So I would say we've seen everything
- 6 from very detailed specifications in an RFP to
- 7 absolutely nothing and an approach of well just
- 8 tell us everything that you could potentially
- 9 provide.
- 10 MR. GAINSBORO: Yeah. I would add in my
- 11 experience, similar to what Chris said, is that
- 12 you have a range and specifically when people are
- 13 dealing with serious issues and problems -- I can
- 14 give you a recent example where we had a potential
- 15 customer who was really -- wanted to provide debit
- 16 calling to their inmates in general. And what
- 17 happened was that funds were being put on but
- 18 through extortion and other means like that, funds
- 19 were -- you know, some large inmate would come to
- 20 smaller inmate or whatever and use force. And
- 21 what happened is that in two different cases, one
- 22 particular case one of our agencies was aware of

264 what we did and came to us and asked and actually added that to the RFP. 3 In another case, they were unaware of it and when they were made aware of it, all of a sudden, they said, "This can solve our problems and protect funds." And which in the context of what we've talked about today, this idea of protecting the inmate families as well as their funds and the inmates, I think, is where you see 10 it. So the answer is both. 11 MR. BYRNE: I think for our particular solution, the cell phone is seen as a risk and so 12 there is a lot of education and discussion around 13 the security of the system and seeing the cell 15 phone not as a risk but as a potential tool or reward and a way to enhance communication between 17 detainees and prisoners. So I would say that it's 18 more push than pull at this particular time for 19 this solution. 20 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Okay. Anybody 21 else? 22 MR. GONGAWARE: I would agree on -- for

265 Telmate's tablets that those who are unfamiliar with it do also consider it a risk. But as they become familiar with it, there is more interest. MODERATOR ZESIGER: Mr. Gongaware, you 4 mentioned the challenges to funding these new 5 technologies, developing them and maintaining 6 7 them, fixing them when they get out and are misused in the marketplace. I wonder if we just go down the panel or whoever wants to address this 10 question but maybe get some different opinions on 11 how these things are funded. These all look bright and promising. I'm sure there are risks 12 13 involved but we just -- I think it might be helpful to hear how you actually get these funded. 15 MR. GONGAWARE: You know, I don't know the details on how they're funded. I'm glad that 17 they are funded. I love building them and 18 Telmate, I think, has good opportunities to keep 19 building these in most of our contracts that we 20 service today. 21 MR. MOORE: From my standpoint, I mean

if I understand your question, we fund them

- 1 internally. There is not a grant that we get.
- 2 There is not an external source of funds. It is
- 3 for us. GTL has a budget for research and
- 4 development, for engineering, for the staff. If
- 5 we have to go to a third party to provide a
- 6 particular service -- I think before Jay's company
- 7 was acquired, it was a service that you could get
- 8 from them. And so you may have to consult with a
- 9 third party or contract with a third party to get
- 10 that service. But again, I mean those are
- 11 internal costs to us.
- MR. BYRNE: For meshIP, this is -- we're
- 13 a startup so it's all self-funded internal
- 14 funding.
- MR. GAINSBORO: In our particular
- 16 situation, I'll tell you one quick little story.
- 17 We knew there was a problem in the industry where
- 18 inmates were communicating with other inmates even
- 19 though they were separated between facilities.
- 20 And it was a big problem. In fact, the Federal
- 21 Bureau of Prisons felt that one of the riots that
- 22 occurred back in the mid- 90's happened as a

- 1 result of -- they were coordinated riots in about
- 2 four or five facilities around the country, and
- 3 they said if you could ever help us solve this
- 4 problem, it would be wonderful. And so we kind of
- 5 talked about it but it was very, very expensive in
- 6 the mid-90's. And as we got smarter as a company
- 7 in how to build technology like this, we
- 8 eventually embarked on it, self -- self basically
- 9 invested in it.
- 10 And then the challenge, and I think this
- 11 would probably help the FCC a little bit was once
- 12 we built it, everybody said, "Well, we don't think
- 13 it's a real problem" or whatever. And so we ended
- 14 up -- we put in hundreds of thousands of dollars
- 15 and eventually, what we decided to do as a company
- 16 was to give it away. And it wasn't totally like
- 17 we were being altruistic. We felt we had invested
- 18 the money and it could be beneficial to the
- 19 industry. And actually, part of the technology
- 20 you heard about today that I referred to was that
- 21 technology.
- 22 So the answer to your question is that

- 1 funding usually for an entrepreneurial startup or
- 2 whatever is usually some entrepreneur has some
- 3 creative means of doing it and finds the money,
- 4 takes it from some other place and 24:23
- 5 (inaudible).
- 6 MODERATOR ZESIGER: The flip side of the
- 7 funding question then -- and again, my question
- 8 was really about internal funding but also impact
- 9 on end user rates, to what extent to expenditures
- 10 made here impact end user rates, and so maybe just
- 11 one more question, follow-up on that point. And
- 12 then -- well, start with that.
- 13 MR. MOORE: You know, so if we have a
- 14 thing that we've developed internally, it's
- 15 something new and we have to recover the cost of
- 16 that, then there may be a rate impact in the near
- 17 term for that. If it's a thing that is specific
- 18 to a particular opportunity and it is a service or
- 19 feature that we have to get from a third party and
- 20 we pay that third party for it and it's directly
- 21 attributed to that opportunity, then yes, that
- 22 could be a component of that rate as well. So --

269 and that's an important point. 2 It's not that -- I know folks think about -- we've heard a lot about basic telephone service and making the call and it's recorded and that's what you've got. I think as Mr. Smith said, there is a lot more to it than that. know, that's as basic as an FM radio in a car. There is so much more that goes into so when you layer in voice biometrics, you layer in geo-10 fencing, location-based services, some of these 11 other things that are new and emerging technologies that require licensing from third 12 13 parties to provide to keep that public safety but also to increase contact, those are things that 15 would be a part of that rate. 16 MR. GAINSBORO: I think in general, most 17 of us would allocate a certain percentage, 18 relatively small compared to our overall, but a 19 certain percentage of our annual expenditures to 20 an R&D type of, you know -- does that answer your 21 question? 22 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Sure. That's more

- 1 the corporate overhead kind of aspect of it. One
- 2 last follow-up question on the rate side, on the
- 3 costs. Give us an idea of samples of the types of
- 4 prices for these interesting new technologies you
- 5 offer to end users?
- 6 MR. GONGAWARE: For Telmate, like our
- 7 messaging service, I think, averages 25 cents a
- 8 message which is a text message, like an average
- 9 text and other interesting things. Photos are a
- 10 little bit more. They're like averaging 26 cents.
- 11 A video visit is -- well, a local video visit is
- 12 almost always free which is interesting, but then
- 13 we offer remote visits at a lot of our facilities
- 14 and those average about 30 cents a minute for a
- 15 remote video visit.
- 16 MR. BYRNE: For meshDetect, for the
- 17 wireless calling, we can offer the permanent rate
- 18 underneath the rate caps that you've stipulated
- 19 for long distance. Unlike the traditional wall
- 20 phones, it's a flat rate very similar to what
- 21 you're used to with your personal cell phone. So
- 22 the same permanent rate no matter whether you're

- 1 calling across the street or across the country.
- 2 And unique, I think, for this service vis-a-vis
- 3 the payphone service is we don't charge any per
- 4 call charge. We understand as you use your cell
- 5 phone, your calls would drop occasionally. That's
- 6 the nature of wireless. So we think it would be
- 7 unfair to charge a per call upfront fee and then
- 8 if that call drops, you're going to have to redial
- 9 that call and take another hit at that. So the
- 10 effective rate, it can, in many cases, be less
- 11 expensive than what a prisoner would be paying on
- 12 a traditional payphone.
- 13 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Great. I have a
- 14 question from the web and they actually beat me to
- 15 one that I was going to ask you about. We just
- 16 had this news piece put in the record and it is
- 17 about how Knox County, Tennessee is replacing in-
- 18 person visits entirely rather than supplementing
- 19 them with video visitations. So instead of even
- 20 having the option for an in-person visit if you're
- 21 able to get to the facility, you're required to do
- 22 video visitation.

- 1 Do you all have any opinions about that
- 2 practice? Do steps need to be taken to guarantee
- 3 that there is a balance between the accessibility
- 4 of video visitation, particularly for, as our
- 5 panelist Talila Lewis told us, hearing impaired
- 6 folks? Is there a balance needed between that
- 7 accessibility and the actual human connection to
- 8 see your person in the flesh, any opinions on
- 9 that?
- MR. MOORE: From my standpoint, you
- 11 know, we generally let the market and the customer
- 12 drive what we do there. You know, we focus on
- 13 filling a product need. We're not experts on the
- 14 sociology of how inmates interact with families,
- 15 so we kind of look to them and the Chief that was
- 16 here earlier to give us guidance on what's working
- 17 for them in that regard and then we react and
- 18 evolve to that.
- 19 MR. GONGAWARE: Similar for Telmate.
- 20 The facilities decide how they want to handle the
- 21 visits. But in the case where they do have video
- 22 visits, it's interesting that they can do more

- simultaneous visits at a time and they can have
- longer visit hours, early in the morning, later at
- night, you know, off the normal work hours which
- is, I think, beneficial to everyone.
- MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Okay. You have
- something else?
- 7 MODERATOR ZESIGER: Maybe just a follow-
- up question to the whole panel. On the impact of
- 9 these technologies on inmate behavior, does it
- help in terms of security or safety internal to 10
- 11 the jails?
- UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would say both. 12
- 13 I think that in some ways, they've helped; in some
- ways, they've hurt. We use the example of when,
- 15 say, debit phone calling was first introduced, so
- when you went from collect only and that was the
- 17 only way a call could go out to debit, inmates had
- 18 funds, inmates had control of their calls, inmates
- 19 had a PIN number that they would enter, and this
- 20 is what Jay alluded to, I think it helped in that
- 21 they had the ability to make more calls, to make
- 22 calls to cell phones that they couldn't have done

- 1 under collect because we didn't have collect
- 2 billing arrangements. But what it did is it
- 3 introduced a safety problem with the inmate in
- 4 that they may be strong-armed to provide their PIN
- 5 number to someone else so that person could use
- 6 it. So it was both sides of it. It helped in one
- 7 way; it hurt in another.
- 8 So then we look at technology to say
- 9 what can we do to solve the hurtful part of that
- 10 and then as we solve that, at some point, someone
- 11 figures out another way and you continue to
- 12 address the problems in that way.
- 13 MR. GAINSBORO: I can address that
- 14 specifically. So when we go in -- and the process
- 15 that happens with continuous voice biometrics is
- 16 you go in and you do an enrollment. And normally,
- 17 what happens is that you take your -- the
- 18 enrollment people that go in are normally escorted
- 19 by correctional officers. When our people go into
- 20 a living unit, basically the first thing they say
- 21 is that you now can have you funds protected. And
- 22 prior to that, before this technology goes in,

- 1 they know their funds are subject to abuse or
- 2 misuse or whatever. And what happens is -- and
- 3 its' funny that you mention Knox County and that
- 4 example because Knox County happens to be one of
- 5 our customers through Pay-Tel. And it turns out
- 6 that they love the technology because they were
- 7 having this problem and now they could identify
- 8 which inmates were actually stealing or strong-
- 9 arming other inmates' funds.
- 10 So the answer to your question is that
- 11 the technology, when used appropriately, actually
- 12 benefits significantly inmates and the inmates'
- 13 families.
- MR. BYRNE: I have a quick point on
- 15 that. There's been study after study that's shown
- 16 that more frequent contact with family reduces
- 17 recidivism so the ability to use a cell phone,
- 18 have a longer conversation because somebody's not
- 19 waiting in line to use the phone after, you're
- 20 restricted to 15 minutes because it is a shared
- 21 use resource, will facilitate that improved
- 22 contact. Also, by using a cell phone, you would

- 1 be able to have privacy. Now I'm not talking
- 2 secrecy because every call is recorded and can be
- 3 monitored and listened to. But to have a little
- 4 privacy, to be able to have a personal
- 5 conversation with a loved one, talk about your
- 6 health, talk about problems at home without, you
- 7 know, everybody around you I think would also be
- 8 very beneficial.
- 9 There was a prison in the UK called
- 10 Lowden Grange where they had a huge problem with
- 11 contraband cell phones and they installed --
- 12 actually installed a phone in each cell. And what
- 13 they found from installing a phone in each cell --
- 14 they'd hardwired it, which is a very expensive way
- 15 to go about this -- was that recidivism was
- 16 reduced. There were fewer fights, less incidents
- 17 of self-harming, and they even had fewer positive
- 18 drug tests after making this change. So there is
- 19 clear proof that increased communication does help
- 20 with behavior and recidivism.
- 21 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: You have another
- 22 one?

- 1 MR. MOORE: And on that point, I would
- 2 like to add one thing there and just one thing to
- 3 point out, that while additional access or more
- 4 access to those devices is of value, there is also
- 5 a balance to how do you pay for those devices. In
- 6 most instances, it's not the facility or the end
- 7 user or the inmate that's actually buying the
- 8 device that they're using to make that
- 9 communication. So another part of that is what is
- 10 the right way to get that thing paid for that you
- 11 can put it into their hands.
- MR. GONGAWARE: I wanted to mention that
- 13 Oregon DOC did a study after Telmate installed its
- 14 videophones which included visitation and
- 15 messaging and paperless grievances. And violence
- 16 was -- violent incidents were down significantly.
- 17 I don't have the number with me. I can follow-up
- 18 with that but their -- their did have a study on
- 19 that.
- 20 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Kind of following
- 21 up, do you think that new -- the desire for new
- 22 technologies is for -- because there is a problem

278 that needs to be fixed and that technology is the way to fix it? Or is it decreased costs of the technologies? Or is it a combination of the both, or? 5 MR. MOORE: From our standpoint, it's definitely not reduced cost because deploying 7 these things, it is additional cost. It's the cost to hire engineers. It's the cost to source third-party software. It's the cost to put these 10 solutions together. So it's generally a business 11 problem in the industry, for us at least, that drives this new technology or it may be an 12 13 opportunity that we see. When I say a business problem, that doesn't mean a problem that the jail It may be the problem is how do we 15 is having. create an environment that inmates can have more 17 contact, or how do we create an environment that 18 inmates can get more access to educational 19 We've talked very little about wallcontent. 20 mounted kiosks or handheld devices that have that 21 capability, but a lot of that comes from that 22 business problem which is how do you educate

279 offenders to help reduce recidivism, how do you get them more contact to help reduce recidivism, how do you get them a job skill to help reduce recidivism. MR. GONGAWARE: I'm not sure about the level of desire for new technologies but we're definitely building lots of new technologies. I 7 love building it. It's fun. 9 We do have requests from facilities. 10 They want certain features. They want 11 enhancements. And we have some of our own interesting ideas that we work on. 12 So I don't know what the true source of all the desire is. 13 MR. GAINSBORO: I think I've always been 14 15 personally very driven by solving people's 16 problems, so I would say the vast majority of our 17 -- the technology needs and stuff comes from, you 18 know, people that are having really significant 19 problems and they need them solved. So does that 20 address your question? 21 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Yes, thank you. 22 MR. BYRNE: I think in our specific

- 1 case, it's really about the problem that was --
- 2 continues to grow and that's contraband cell
- 3 phones. And as the phones get smaller and harder
- 4 to find and more and more money is spent trying to
- 5 detect them and take them out of the jail, how do
- 6 you address the real demand. And if its' all
- 7 crime-based conversations, then this makes no
- 8 sense. But it's pretty clear that it's not
- 9 because when they'll put in managed access jammers
- 10 that eliminate the use of contraband cell phones,
- 11 the use of the wall phones goes up. So if I was
- 12 using that cell phone in order to have a
- 13 conversation I didn't want monitored or recorded,
- 14 I'm not going to go to the wall phone and use that
- 15 vehicle. So it's clear that there's a demand for
- 16 enhanced conversation and maybe lower rates as
- 17 well.
- 18 MODERATOR ZESIGER: So, you all are the
- 19 ones who are looking to the future and trying to
- 20 push us all into the future in terms of new types
- 21 of services and technologies for inmates and their
- 22 friends and families, so you have a special kind

- 1 of front row seat to the crystal ball, if you
- 2 will, from your own perspectives of the future and
- 3 what's next. It might be interesting for us to
- 4 just hear from you, if you have any thoughts about
- 5 where is all this headed? What's the next
- 6 generation? What's the next big thing that you
- 7 see coming?
- 8 MR. MOORE: For us, I think it's where I
- 9 ended the evolution of inmate communications and
- 10 it is the handheld device. So all of the things
- 11 that are being developed in regards to
- 12 applications to benefit the inmate, things like
- 13 email, like educational content, job skills and
- 14 other things, how do you then get that into an
- 15 environment that they can use more readily. So --
- 16 because we talked about if it's stuck on the wall,
- 17 that may not be convenient. So how do you get it
- 18 to a place that they can use it regularly at an
- 19 affordable cost that benefits them.
- 20 MR. GONGAWARE: For friends and family,
- 21 we're developing Smartphone apps and Tablet apps
- 22 to make contact with inmates much more accessible,

- 1 much easier. I can see that we'll continue
- 2 improving those apps. I mean they're easy to
- 3 update. We don't charge for these apps.
- 4 And then on the inmate side, I'm
- 5 thinking a little further out there but I can see
- 6 Cloud storage being important for them. People
- 7 have personal digital goods out there that they
- 8 need to have access to and music they bought,
- 9 books they bought, and we need to provide a
- 10 solution to get them in and out of the facility
- 11 safely.
- MR. GAINSBORO: You know, it's
- 13 interesting you said "we're pushing." I don't
- 14 feel like we're pushing. I think -- you know,
- 15 just a distinction, I think we're being pulled
- 16 because, you know, I've been in the industry for
- 17 25 years, maybe more than these guys -- I don't
- 18 know -- 25 years now and I've watched what
- 19 happens. And what happens is we introduce new
- 20 technology and it's to solve a problem, and then
- 21 all of a sudden, what happens is that there's a
- 22 new problem that evolves and it's like an arms

283 race that continues to go back and forth. 2 I think specifically where we're focused 3 in the future is the company really wants to automatically identify as quickly as possible and as economically as possible which calls are representing the greatest public risk. And I think without taking that into account, we really are doing, from my perspective, the public an 9 injustice because to just simply look at this 10 problem through well, we'll just give them new 11 technology I think, personally, is somewhat irresponsible. AND I think we need -- that's an -12 - you know, we're dealing with an inmate 13 population. We're not dealing with, you know --14 15 and granted, the vast majority of them are fine but that small percentage creates a lot of risk, and there's a lot of things you can point to in 17 18 this country, you know, about examples of that. 19 So we're focused on how do we make 20 inmate calling safer in the future and that's what 21 we're doing. 22 MR. BYRNE: Without discounting the

284 risk, it is a consumer market of a sort. detainees will eventually be back out and hopefully better off having served their time. And so you need to give them the tools to continue to improve themselves, to educate themselves, to stay connected to family and society, look for 7 jobs in an automated way as much as possible just like you see outside the prison walls. 9 technology does reach but the challenge is to make 10 sure that it's used appropriately, properly and 11 its manageable and monitorable but eventually, they will have devices like we all do. 12 13 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: I will give you all an opportunity to say any final words. If not, I 15 think that is a good question to end on where 16 we're going next, and if there is anything else 17 anybody wants to take the opportunity to say or --18 MR. MOORE: (Inaudible) time today. 19 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: Thank you. 20 you very much. Great. 21 (Applause.) 22 MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: We have closing

285 remarks. We'll just -- if we could just turn around and Kalpak will --3 MODERATOR GUDE: Sorry. MODERATOR ENGLEDOW: -- close us out for the day. 5 6 MODERATOR GUDE: Thought it would be a 7 little quicker instead of having everyone relocate. First of all, I wanted to thank 9 everybody for coming. Obviously, this is a 10 complicated issue. It's more complicated even 11 than we thought when we first started. There are obviously very critical issues of -- for inmates 12 and their families and friends, the impact of high 13 rates to them. There are security issues. 14 15 are jail issues and prison issues. This is a 16 complicated set of things we deal with and all of 17 you coming here, participating, sharing with us 18 your knowledge and expertise improves our 19 understanding and frankly, I hope and believe it 20 will improve the end product of what comes out of 21 this process. So let me start by saying again, thank 22

- 1 you to everyone for coming. I particularly want
- 2 to thank Congresswoman Holmes Norton for making
- 3 the time to come here and again elevate the
- 4 importance of this issue at a different level, at
- 5 a political level but at an understanding level
- 6 that really impacts people.
- 7 Also want to thank, obviously, Chairman
- 8 Wheeler and Commissioners Clyburn and Rosenworcel
- 9 for really leading the effort at the Commission to
- 10 move this process. As you all know, this is one
- 11 that has been sitting here for over 10 years.
- 12 Commissioner Clyburn, when she was acting
- 13 Chairwoman, drove the process to really get it
- 14 moving again and she deserves an enormous amount
- 15 of credit for taking on this tough challenge.
- 16 I finally want to also thank the great
- 17 staff that I have in my division at the Pricing
- 18 Policy Division in the Wireline Telecommunications
- 19 Bureau and the Consumer and Government Affairs
- 20 Bureau at the FCC as well as the AV staff, the
- 21 social media team, our interpreters, everyone
- 22 who's involved. It really does take a small

- 1 village to make all of this happen.
- 2 Finally, I wanted to thank Darrell
- 3 Baker, Elias Diggins and Kevin Landy. I'm calling
- 4 you all out as government officials and
- 5 representatives from different parties. To come
- 6 here and share your knowledge and expertise with
- 7 us, Darrel, you traveled from Alabama; Elias, you
- 8 came all the way from Colorado; and Kevin walked
- 9 across the street. But in all cases, we really
- 10 appreciate folks coming in and all of the
- 11 panelists and the audience as well. This really
- 12 has been instructive to us and will move the
- 13 process forward. But thank you very much. We
- 14 appreciate it.
- 15 Please stay involved in the process.
- 16 This is not the end by any means. The Commission
- 17 intends to continue. We will probably have
- 18 another opportunity for the public to comment. We
- 19 hope you all do. And continue to be involved and
- 20 help us and guide us move in the right direction.
- 21 Thank you again.
- 22 (Whereupon, at 4:12, the workshop was adjourned.)

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