

**PRISONERS' LEGAL SERVICES\***

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June 14, 2012

Dear friends:

As you may know, PLS filed a petition before the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC) on behalf of prisoners, their families, attorneys, and other users of prison telephone service, asking the DTC to limit telephone rates and investigate the poor quality of prison telephone service.

**On Thursday July 19, 2012 the DTC will hold public hearings on prison telephone rates and quality of service.** This is an opportunity for friends and loved ones of prisoners, former prisoners, and attorneys representing prisoners to be heard. The schedule is as follows:

10 am – 12pm	Comments on Global Tel Link (GTL is the phone company serving all of the Department of Correction prisons and Plymouth County Correctional Facility)
12:30 – 2:30 pm	Comments on Securus (also known as Evercom, serving all Massachusetts county facilities except those in Hampshire and Plymouth Counties)
3 pm – 5 pm	Comments on Inmate Calling Solutions (serving Hampshire County)

**If you are a member of the public and wish to observe or comment** come to the DTC, 1000 Washington Street, Hearing Room E, in Boston (near the Orange Line New England Medical Center T station). Those who wish to comment will need to sign in. Please let PLS know that you are planning to come by calling Alphonse Kamanzi, 617-482-2773.

**If you are currently a prisoner, or a friend or family member of a prisoner, and you wish to submit written comment** you may forward comments to PLS and we will file them with the DTC on the day of the hearing. Please be sure to mail them to us at least a week beforehand. We also encourage you to forward this information on the hearing to your loved ones.

**Some information you should include in your comments:**

- **Basic information:** Where you, your loved ones, or your clients are incarcerated and who the phone provider is.
- **Why phone service matters to you.** Do you live too far to visit? Is the telephone the best or only way for your child to keep in touch with his or her parent, or for a relative or friend to

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\* Formerly known as Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services

keep in touch with a loved one? How does keeping in touch help you and your loved ones? If you are an attorney, how important is it to have affordable and reliable phone access with your clients?

- **How prison telephone rates have affected you.** This may include the amount you are forced to spend monthly, how that compares to your income, whether you have to choose between talking to a loved one versus paying for other basic needs, etc.
- **Problems you have encountered with telephone service.** This may include issues like dropped calls, poor connections, intrusive recordings, lack of response to complaints, and billing problems.

**This is public comment, it is not an adversarial hearing.** Because the petitioners asked the DTC to set new rates, the agency is obliged by statute to take public comment. The lawyers for each side will not be presenting evidence or making arguments at this hearing. After the public hearing, the DTC will decide whether to dismiss the case or let it go forward.

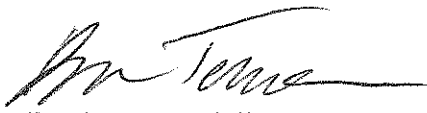
**Please show the DTC how important it is to make the phone rates more reasonable and improve the quality of service.**

If you have a loved one in prison, or clients in prison who are affected by the phone rates, please come to the hearing, whether just to observe or to comment. And please encourage others to come, or to send us their written comments if they can't attend.

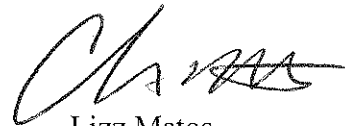
If you are in prison, please send us your comments, and encourage your loved ones to attend the hearing on July 19<sup>th</sup>, or to submit written comments.

This is our chance to show the DTC how many of us are affected by outrageous prison phone rates and poor service, and why now is the time to change it.

Sincerely,



Bonita Tenneriello  
Staff Attorney



Lizz Matos  
Staff Attorney