

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2017

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to express our disappointment with the decision made by the FCC to end the defense of intrastate rate caps for incarcerated individuals.

Prior to the caps on prison phone rates, making calls to loved ones was a financial burden for many Americans who are paying upwards of \$1.50 per minute. Most families depend on these phone calls to maintain the vital relationships their incarcerated loved ones will depend on when they are released. In fact, 70 percent of incarcerated people kept in contact with their loved ones over the phone, rather than in person.¹

In 2012, the FCC placed a limit on what companies could charge for interstate phone calls. However, this limit does not apply for phone calls made within a state, intrastate calls, which can still be too high and represent the bulk of phone calls made from correctional facilities. Capping rates for calls within a state is an essential piece in fixing our nation's broken incarceration system.

Evidence suggests that greater connection to family and loved ones leads to lower rates of recidivism. Maintaining access to telecommunication is particularly important for millions of American families—as of 2015, 2.7 million children in the United States have an incarcerated parent.²

Affordable phone calls are important for keeping our families strong and our communities safe. We urge you and Commissioner O'Reilly to reconsider your decision on this matter.


Sincerely,

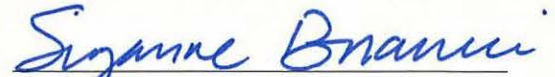


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Member of Congress

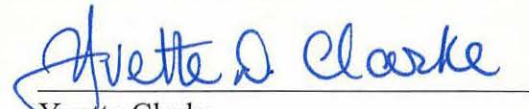


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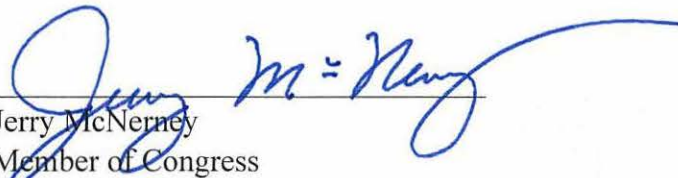

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Barbara Lee
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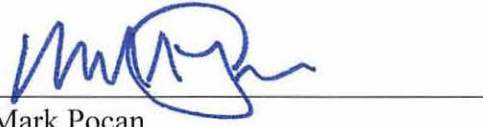

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
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Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



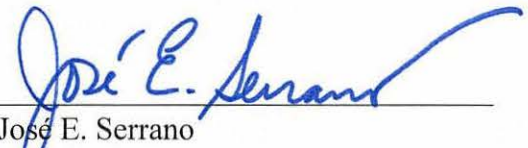
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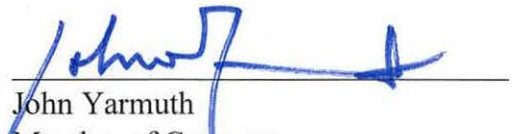
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Mark Takano
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

CC: Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Michael O'Reilly, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

[1] <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10113804521853/Comments%20of%20ICS%20Advocates%20-%20As%20Submitted.pdf>

[2] <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/prisonvisits.html>