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**For Immediate Release****FCC ACTS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES  
FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES*****Mandates Access to All Forms of Telecommunications Relay Services and Reforms  
Abusive Calling-Related Practices***

WASHINGTON, September 29, 2022—The Federal Communications Commission adopted rules today to bring relief to incarcerated people with communication disabilities by easing the obstacles they face in communicating with family, loved ones, and other sources of support. The ability to make telephone calls is essential to allowing incarcerated people to stay connected. Communication barriers and excessive calling charges affect all incarcerated people but are especially onerous for those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or who have a speech disability.

The FCC will now require inmate calling services providers to provide access to all relay services eligible for [Telecommunications Relay Services](#) fund support in any correctional facility that is located where broadband is available and is part of a correctional system with 50 or more incarcerated people. This includes the ability to place point-to-point video calls using American Sign Language (ASL). The rule also restricts provider charges for relay services and point-to-point video calls.

More generally, the rules will reduce certain charges and curtail abusive practices related to inmate calling services to ease the financial burdens on all incarcerated people and their families.

To ensure that the rates, terms, and practices related to interstate and international inmate calling services are just and reasonable, the new rules will prohibit providers from taking control of funds in inactive calling accounts until at least 180 calendar days of continuous inactivity has passed, after which providers would be required to refund the balance or dispose of the funds in accordance with applicable state law.

The Order also lowers the current ancillary fee caps on charges for single call services, and lowers the cap on provider charges for processing credit card, debit card, and other payments to calling services accounts.

A Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on other action to make telephone service for all incarcerated individuals more equitable and affordable.

Action by the Commission September 29, 2022 by Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 22-76). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks issuing separate statements.

WC Docket No. 12-375

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*

