



# **Bipartisan Duckworth-Portman-Schatz-Booker bill to help reduce recidivism rates gains support from justice leaders and civil rights organizations**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Rob Portman (R-OH), Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) to help families keep in touch with incarcerated family members, which is proven to help reduce recidivism rates and save taxpayer dollars, is gaining momentum, with 28 criminal justice leaders and civil rights organizations [writing the Senators](#) to express their support. The Senators' *Inmate Calling Technical Corrections Act* would address long-standing concerns regarding predatory inmate calling rates at prison facilities across the U.S. and would affirm the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) authority to address a market failure to protect family, clergy, and counsel who communicate with prisoners, inmates and detainees.

“Unjust and unreasonable charges negatively impact the safety and security of communities in the United States by exacerbating recidivism and damaging relationships between people in prison and their support systems,” wrote the officials and leaders. “The Federal Communications Commission possesses the expertise to take a hard look at the costs of providing telephone service in order to ensure just and reasonable rates for all telephone calls and fees in the absence of competition. The *Inmate Calling Technical Correction Act* would clarify Congress' intent that the Federal Communications Commission protect all consumers and prevent these outrageous rates that negatively impact the safety of all people in the United States.”

The Senators [introduced the legislation](#) in March of 2018 following a federal court's decision that the Communications Act authorizes FCC to regulate interstate prison calls, but does not clearly authorize the FCC to address intrastate prison telecommunication services. At an August U.S. Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee

oversight hearing, Duckworth [received a commitment](#) from Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioners Michael O’Rielly, Jessica Rosenworcel, Brendan Carr and Chairman Ajit Pai to help address unjust and unreasonable inmate call rates.

The *Inmate Calling Technical Corrections Act* is now endorsed by: Fr. Michael Bryant, Catholic Chaplain, D.C. Jail; John Clark (Retired), Warden and Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons; Sheriff Pete Dougherty, Jefferson County, West Virginia; Kenneth L. Faiver (Retired), Director of Health Care, Michigan Department of Corrections; Ron Hampton, past Executive Director of the National Black Police Association, Inc.; Robert A. Hood, M.Ed., Warden (Retired), Federal "Supermax" Penitentiary; Ken Kerle, founding editor, American Jails Magazine; Stefan LoBuglio, Former Chief of Pre-Release and Reentry Services Division, Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation; Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi (Retired), San Francisco, CA; Robert Woodson, Founder and President, Woodson Center; the American Civil Liberties Union; Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC); Christian Reformed Church, Office of Social Justice; the Friends Committee on National Legislation; Healing Communities USA; Interfaith Action for Human Rights; Interfaith Worker Justice; International CURE; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; the NAACP; the National Alliance of Faith and Justice; the National Consumer Law Center; the National Urban League; the Prison Policy Initiative; the R Street Institute; the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ, OC Inc.

More information on the *Inmate Calling Technical Corrections Act* is available [here](#).

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).