



KEEP MISSOURI FAMILIES CONNECTED

End Excessive Jail Phone Rates

SUPPORT

HB 317

REP. DAVIS
(R-Belton)

SB 301

SEN. ROBERTS
(D-St. Louis)

The Problem: Some Missouri Jails Charge Excessive Phone Rates

- 19% of Missouri jails charge \$5.25 for a 15-minute call.
- If an individual in a Missouri jail calls their family for just 15 minutes daily, the costs can add up quickly:
 - \$147 for 4 weeks
 - \$958.13 for 6 months
 - \$1,916.25 for 1 year

High Phone Rates Hurt Missouri's Most Vulnerable Families

- In a survey, 62% of fathers in jail speak to their minor children weekly, and 22% daily.^[i]
- People in jail and their families are often poor.
 - Men's average annual income before incarceration: \$15,598
 - Women's average annual income before incarceration: \$11,071^[ii]

WHY THIS MATTERS

- **Staying connected through regular phone calls protects the mental health of incarcerated individuals** and helps reduce their risk of alcohol abuse after release.^[iii] Unfortunately, high phone rates often make it impossible for families to maintain this crucial contact.
- **Children with an incarcerated parent face higher risks of self-harm and suicide**, but maintaining communication can reduce these risks by providing stability and strengthening their relationship with their parent.^[iv] These children deserve the chance to stay connected—but for many families, the cost of calls puts this out of reach.

Other States Are Taking Action – Missouri Should Too

Minnesota, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, California, and Kentucky have made phone calls free for incarcerated individuals.^[v] Missouri can take a stand by:

- Capping fees that some correctional communications companies charge, like paper statements or third-party transaction charges.
- Advocating for affordable or free calls to keep families connected.

To learn how you can help, visit missouriappleseed.org or email Liza Weiss at LWeiss@appleseednetwork.org

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- ^[i] Shlafer, R.J., Davis, L., Hindt, L., Weymouth, L., Cuthrell, H., Burnson, C., & Poehlmann-Tynan, J. (2020). Fathers in Jail and their Minor Children: Paternal Characteristics and Associations with Father-Child Contact. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 29, 791–801. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-020-01696-3>
- ^[ii] Prison Policy Initiative. (2016). *Detaining the poor: How money bail perpetuates an endless cycle of poverty and jail time*. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/incomejails.html>
- ^[iii] Folk, J. B., Stuewig, J., Mashek, D., Tangney, J. P., & Grossmann, J. (2019). Behind bars but connected to family: Evidence for the benefits of family contact during incarceration. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 33(4), 453–464. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000520>
- ^[iv] Davis, L. & Shlafer, R.J. (2017). Mental health of adolescents with currently and formerly incarcerated parents. *Journal of Adolescence* 54: 120 – 134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.10.006>
- ^[v] Kobin, B. (2021, June 24). Seen as a long overdue change, Louisville plans to eliminate fees on phone calls from jail. *Louisville Courier Journal*, <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/politics/metro-government/2021/06/24/louisville-aims-eliminate-metro-corrections-jail-phone-call-fees/5317998001/>