



THE HIGH COST OF CALLING HOME FROM JAIL

Did you know?

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services policy requires all calls from inmates to be collect calls.

The cost of these calls are passed along to families and lawyers.

Our concerns

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) and John Howard Society of Ontario are concerned about the high cost of calling family, friends and legal counsel from Ontario's jails.

Together, we have asked the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to consider changes to improve the situation for prisoners and their families who want and need to maintain affordable contact.

Who's affected?



People waiting for trial (people who are presumed innocent until proven guilty)



People in immigration custody



Prisoners in sentenced custody

Why does it matter?



Inmates who are able to keep in touch with their families are more likely to reintegrate successfully upon release



Many families can't afford the added cost of collect calls from jail



Prisoners often have ongoing or new legal issues that make it necessary for them to call their lawyers



The inability to afford contact with legal and emotional support can place prisoners at risk of mental health issues, failed rehabilitation, and continued imprisonment

Ontario jail phone calls



239,000
local calls/month



50,000
long distance calls/month

Sources

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Statistics on Calls.

Toronto Star. "Prisons in Canada are increasing phone costs for inmates."

Radio Canada International. "Advocates decry increased charges for prisoner phone calls."

CBC. "Province gets 'kickback' from inmates' collect calls, lawyer says."

