



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1679</b>		DATE: <b>2/21/2024</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Corrections and Public Institutions</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ALEX EATON</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-616-9860</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>FAMILIES AGAINST MANDATORY MINIMUMS</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>1100 H STREET NW SUITE 1000</b>		
CITY: <b>WASHINGTON</b>		STATE: <b>DC</b>
		ZIP: <b>20005</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 12:00 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 11:53 PM</b>
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**Lower the Rates!**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GWEN SMITH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-324-9656</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>EMPOWER MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY MANAGER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>4428 ELLENWOOD AVE</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63116</b>
EMAIL: <b>gwen@empowermissouri.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 10:04 AM</b>	

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Founded in 1901, Empower Missouri advocates for the well-being of Missourians through civic leadership, education, and research. As part of our work, we organize a statewide Community Justice Coalition with the goal of decreasing recidivism, decreasing the prison population, and decreasing Missouri’s criminal justice costs all while ensuring our communities are safe. It is imperative that incarcerated individuals are able to stay in communication with their loved ones while they are serving their sentences. Many individuals who are incarcerated have pre-existing mental health conditions, and even those who don’t can suffer great consequences to their mental health brought on by isolation. Maintaining a connection with family fosters a sense of hope, encourages good behavior, and helps maintain important parental and other familial bonds. Incarcerated individuals who maintain strong family ties have an easier time transitioning home and are more likely to succeed during re-entry, benefiting themselves, their families, and their community. HB 1679, sponsored by Rep. Michael Davis, would cap the cost of domestic phone calls in prisons at 12 cents per minute, the cost of calls in jails with average daily populations of more than 1000 inmates at 14 cents per minute, and the cost of calls in jails with average daily populations of fewer than 1000 inmates at 21 cents per minute. Based on these rates, the cost of a 15 minute phone call would be capped at \$1.80, \$2.10, and \$3.15, respectively. On average, a 15-minute phone call in a correctional facility costs \$5.74, while some prisons are charging \$1 or more per minute. One study found that more than a third of families with incarcerated relatives went into debt over the costs of staying in touch with their loved ones. Many of these families are already suffering financially from missing a wage earner from the household– they should not go further into debt in order to fulfill a basic human need for connection. Meanwhile, the high costs of phone calls in jails and prisons generates \$1.4B per year for the correctional telecommunications sector. HB 1679 provides an important profit cap for these businesses while protecting access to an essential service for incarcerated individuals and their families. We urge this committee to vote yes on this bill.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEFF SMITH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-323-0915</b>
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI APPLESEED</b>		TITLE:
ADDRESS: <b>5380 MAGNOLIA</b>		
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>63139</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>LINDA S PIEPER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>lspieper13@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/19/2024 12:41 PM</b>
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I am in support of House Bill 1679 pursuant to the following statement.!) Most inmates and families do not have the funds to communicate with one another during incarceration via phone calls2) A cap is necessary so that MO DOC or any jail doesn't just pass an extreme cost on to the inmate or families without any accountability3) Considering a Missouri inmates pay, working in the prison, is a between \$40 to \$80 per month, with half percent going back to the prison for room and board, a quarter percent paid to the inmates commissary account and the final quarter percent being put in a savings for the inmate upon release. You can figure out the inmate is living on less slavery type wages. 4) SO phone call costs and additional costs are very important because they impact the inmates' budget adversely I would defer to House Bill 2169 Section 221.108, if I am reading it correctly, the cost would not exceed five cents per minute.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MARIA GOELLNER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>717-945-9089</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>FAMM</b>		TITLE: <b>FAMM DIRECTOR OF STATE POLICY</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1903 W. 8TH ST. PMB 257</b>			
CITY: <b>ERIE</b>		STATE: <b>PA</b>	ZIP: <b>16502</b>
EMAIL: <b>mgoellner@famm.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 10:45 AM</b>	

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Written Statement of Maria Goellner Director of State Policy, FAMM In Support of Missouri House Bills 1679 and 2169 House Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions February 21, 2024 Thank you to the Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee for considering this written statement in support of House Bills (HB) 1679 and 2169. These bills would cap charges from correctional centers, jails, or other parties on incarcerated people’s telephone calls. HB 1679 caps the rate at \$0.12 for domestic phone calls from state prisons and up to \$0.21 cents for jails depending on population size. HB 2169 caps the rate at \$0.05 per minute for domestic phone calls. I write on behalf of FAMM, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that seeks to create a justice system that respects our American values of individual accountability and dignity while keeping communities safe. For more than three decades, FAMM has been a leading voice for sentencing policies that are individualized and fair, protect public safety, and preserve families. Our members in Missouri include people from all walks of life, including those with incarcerated loved ones or themselves returning home from prison. Many of our families have suffered from both incarceration and crime; experiences that are not mutually exclusive. FAMM supports policies that allow incarcerated people to maintain important family bonds. Incarcerated people have families. These families have done nothing wrong and yet they must deal day after day with the effects of a loved one in prison. Prison time devastates families emotionally, psychologically, and financially. Many of you and your constituents have been personally impacted by the incarceration of loved ones. Shame, stigma, and lack of access may keep many of your constituents from speaking up about their family’s experience with incarceration. With 1 in 2 adults in the United States experiencing incarceration in their families, there is no doubt that you have suffering constituents. What is the harm? To the families we talk to every day, it is incalculable. Ask yourself, what is the value of all the times you hugged your father over the course of your life? What is the value of sitting by your loved one’s bed as they lay sick or dying? What is the value of a mother consoling her children and wiping away their tears? Imagine not being able to touch, hug, have a simple meal, or run errands with your loved one. You cannot see them at will, or call and tell them about family emergencies, illnesses, or daily triumphs and challenges. If it’s your spouse, imagine that you can never share a bed again, or parent and bear children. Consider that you lose all of the loved one’s current and future income to your family – which may consist of your household’s entire earnings, or a significant portion of it. You lose the love one’s labor in caring for your children and sick or elderly relatives. Your entire life is fundamentally changed by your family member’s imprisonment, and the quality of that life is reduced. Incarceration is living torture to families of the people incarcerated. I regularly speak to mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, and children in extreme distress over the multi-faceted separation from their loved ones. Families “do the time” with their loved ones, and what they

lose is priceless. Further, consider the worry and stress in other areas of your life. You may have to provide explanations for the loved one's absence to your children, friends, teachers, supervisors, co-workers, coaches, and more. Your answers may subject your family to shame, stigma, bullying, and general loss of social capital. You will mentally and emotionally worry about the conditions in which your loved one is incarcerated. Who else is there? Is your loved one safe? Who is their cellmate or on their block? Will they be sexually assaulted in prison? Will someone hurt them? Are they getting appropriate medical care for their chronic condition or the new illness that has sprung up? Are they getting their nutritional and dietary needs? Is their mental illness being treated or even considered? Through all of this, Missouri families maintain love, connection, and cohesion through regular telephone calls. Parents do homework with their children from prison by telephone call; husbands tell their wives they love them from prison by telephone call; grandparents sing "happy birthday" to grandchildren from prison by telephone call. Medical diagnoses are relayed, tears are shed, laughter is shared. Life happens for incarcerated families by telephone call. Unfortunately, these calls – like many other aspects of incarceration – cause significant financial hardship. In addition to losing someone who is often a significant source of income or family labor, families must now pay for access to their loved one. Telephone access is often all they have, because people are regularly placed in prisons far away from home, and Missouri is a big state. Many families are completely unable to physically or financially travel hours away to visit their loved ones, which requires money, reliable transportation, time off work, substitute care for children and other loved ones, hotel lodgings, meals out, etc. Prison wages are measly; usually cents per hour. The reality is that families bear the brunt of these costs and suffer because of them. HB 1679 and 2169 would remedy one aspect of family hardship by capping the cost of domestic calls in correctional facilities. FAMM recommends adopting a \$0.05 per minute cap. It would benefit Missouri families and Missouri public safety. FAMM supports these pieces of legislation. Thank you for considering our views. Please reach out to [mgoellner@famm.org](mailto:mgoellner@famm.org) or (717) 945-9089 with questions or to discuss this further.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SHARON GEUEA JONES</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-808-2156</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>DREAM ORG; MO STATE CONFERENCE NAACP</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>227 JEFFERSON ST</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>sharon@jonesadvocacy.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2024 4:51 PM</b>	
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<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>DON BICKHAUS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>doniibecky@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/17/2024 5:06 PM</b>
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**Do NOT support...It should be left up to the particular correctional facility.**