



24 March 2025

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee;

I am writing on behalf of the Restorative Justice Project Maine, in support of LD 647, a bill supporting video and telephone call allowance of up to 90 minutes for jail and prison residents.

Private phone contracts are a multi-million dollar industry in Maine. Companies have paid county governments millions of dollars in revenue-sharing agreements for exclusive telephone contracts at our jails, which inmates and their families must pay into to communicate.¹ This is money coming for the most part directly from innocent family members who have no choice but pay the fees to talk with their loved ones. It is wrong to use innocent family members as a funding source for county jails.

Poor families, in particular the thousands of children in Maine with a parent in custody, are harmed by the inability to connect. To disrupt the intergenerational cycle of incarceration and poor outcomes for Maine's children, we must implement policies supporting families. This starts with communication. Providing a 90 minute allowance for telephone or video connection with families and loved ones for residents of Maine correctional facilities will be a major step forward.

Respectfully,

Tim Hughes, M.D.

Legislative Committee, Restorative Justice Project Maine

¹<https://themainemonitor.org/as-families-struggle-to-afford-15-minute-phone-calls-from-jail-maine-counties-rake-in-millions/>



Restorative Justice Project
Maine

Restorative Justice Project

P.O. Box 141, Belfast, ME 04915 • T 207.338.2742 • www.rjpmidcoast.org

Tim Hughes
Belfast
LD 647

24 March 2025

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee;

I am writing on behalf of the Restorative Justice Project Maine, in support of LD 647, a bill supporting video and telephone call allowance of up to 90 minutes for jail and prison residents.

Private phone contracts are a multi-million dollar industry in Maine. Companies have paid county governments millions of dollars in revenue-sharing agreements for exclusive telephone contracts at our jails, which inmates and their families must pay into to

communicate.¹ This is money coming for the most part directly from innocent family members who have no choice but pay the fees to talk with their loved ones. It is wrong to use innocent family members as a funding source for county jails.

Poor families, in particular the thousands of children in Maine with a parent in custody, are harmed by the inability to connect. To disrupt the intergenerational cycle of incarceration and poor outcomes for Maine's children, we must implement policies supporting families. This starts with communication. Providing a 90 minute allowance for telephone or video connection with families and loved ones for residents of Maine correctional facilities will be a major step forward.

Respectfully,

Tim Hughes, M.D.

Legislative Committee, Restorative Justice Project Maine

(1)<https://themainemonitor.org/as-families-struggle-to-afford-15-minute-phone-calls-from-jail-maine-counties-rake-in-millions/>

Restorative Justice Project

P.O. Box 141, Belfast, ME 04915 • T 207.338.2742 • www.rjpmidcoast.org

Restorative Justice Project

P.O. Box 141, Belfast, ME 04915 • T 207.338.2742 • www.rjpmidcoast.org