

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services*, WC Docket No. 12-375

With this rulemaking, the Commission takes a step toward addressing the high cost that prison inmates and their families must pay for phone service. This is not just an issue of markets and rates; it is a broader issue of social justice. Consider that across the country roughly 2.7 million children have at least one parent in prison. In many cases, inmates are separated from their families by hundreds of miles, and families may lack the time and means to make regular visits. Phone calls are the only way these families can stay connected. But when a single call may cost as much as a month of unlimited phone service, the financial burden of staying in touch may be too much for inmates' families to bear. This harms the families and children of the incarcerated. But it goes beyond that. It harms all of us because we know that regular contact between prisoners and family members reduces recidivism.

This rulemaking presents an opportunity to ask questions and refresh the record on interstate inmate payphone rates. The record this proceeding has generated so far has shown that inmate rates can vary tremendously based on the state law involved, the type of prison facility, and the specific contract for services. Since site commission fees paid by inmate telephone service providers to prisons may be used to cover the costs of inmate security, as we move forward we must ensure that our efforts to reduce interstate rates do not compromise prison safety.

Finally, I want to thank Chairman Genachowski for initiating this proceeding, and Commissioner Clyburn for her advocacy on this issue on behalf of prisoners and their families. I look forward to reviewing the record, and working with my colleagues to help find a way to lower these rates—and in turn, help inmates and their families stay connected.