"Phone Justice"

A) Metro PCS offers unlimited talk, Text and web for $40.00 dollars a month.

B) Net 10 Wireless offers unlimited calls, text and internet for $50.00 dollars a month.

C) Global Tel Link (GTL) Inmate Phone System offers a 20 minute collect call for $1.00 dollar connecting fee, plus .10¢ cents per minute after that for a grand total of $2.90, not including tax of course!

It doesn't require a high school diploma or GED to realize which of the above is the worst deal. (That would be "C" in case you're still in elementary school) How is it possible with today's technology that a 20 minute collect call by a prisoner needs to cost so much money when a smart phone user is able to make calls, send text messages, and surf the web for a fraction of that price? Well, GTL will have you believe that their complicated set up of monitoring and recording phone calls demands and justifies such high fees. Yet, they conveniently neglect to inform you that they utilize VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) technology to make these collect calls! I learned this in Mr. Racioppi's computer class, he was one of my college professors last semester. When my family receives a collect call from me, their caller ID shows the call originating from Dallas, Texas-which is where the GTL call center is located. All prison collect calls handled by GTL throughout the US is routed to Dallas via VOIP and then connected to the destination via VOIP yet again. VOIP companies such as MagicJack, charge only $20.00 dollars for a year's subscription for unlimited phone calls! With these facts in mind, how can anyone not see the injustice and inconvenience these prison phone calls are causing our families!?

I am extraordinarily lucky to have a job in prison which pays me $7.50 per week. Yet, half of that amount goes into a savings account which cannot be accessed until my release. So with the $3.75 that I am allowed to spend, I am only able to make one phone call per week to my family. You may think 20 minutes per week of pone time is enough, but that's because you are able to live with your wife or girlfriend and children. You see them each day, eat with them, put them to sleep at night. However, I must arrange time each week when my family is available to accept my call. By the time I finish saying "Hi" and asking how each one of them are doing, the GTL recording comes on to inform me that I have 60 seconds remaining on my phone call. the pain I feel when I have to hurriedly tell my daughter that our phone time is up and I can only talk to her again next

week, is hard to bear. She doesn't understand why it's such a big deal for daddy to call her especially when she can talk all day on her cell phone without worries. My daughter relies on talking to me. When I was 16 yrs. old, I quit school, I didn't value education. I felt that I set a bad example because she also quit school at the same age. So, I educated myself further and obtained my GED and took the B.U. (Boston University) entrance exam, passed, was interviewed and accepted. I am currently a sophmore with a 3.5 GPA. Through phone conversations, I have been able to preach to my daughter the importance of having an education. From taking my advice, she enrolled in Job Corp. and received her GED and Certified Nursing Assistant licence. As I continue to tell her about the importance of a higher education, I lead by example. Collect calls play a big part in being involved in your family's lives. But, the basic privilege of making phone calls should not be a burden on them because of the greed of inmate phone companies. (A.K.A. Corporate Moguls) There is no doubt that collect calls can be made cheaper, if only someone will step up to regulate the service. I want to keep in close contact with my children so they won't go down the road I traveled. Hearing their voices and giving them my wisdom is an important way to insure they remain on the positive path. I hope you will help us-the prisoners-to stay connected with our families by lowering the cost of phone calls.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Gomes