

Date: 9/26/2018

Subject: Down side of affordable phone calls (9-18-2018)

In July the cost for a 30 min phone call dropped to about 30 cents. A true blessing! Now, in the houses where gangs have a strong presence there has begun extortion rings. Pay to have a place in line to use the phone. Nothing about this is surprising.

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This sets our veterans house apart. We maintain a mutual respect and everyone has equal access. In fact, on most days the noise level in the day room is kept low enough to make calls. Most prison day rooms are pure chaos. Thug-fests. Gladiator schools. Criminal training centers.

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While there are card games, dominoes and scrabble games every day; they are peaceful, and others can be seen doing art work and Bible studies at the same time. Three days a week we have peer run , voluntary classes / discussion groups on Anger Management, Communication and Changing Criminal Thinking. Our goal is to establish classes 7-days a week, but we need an IDOC assigned facilitator for this.

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In many cases this gang "control" in most prison houses, can actually keep things more respectful and peaceful overall. It guarantees access and reduces violence. Without some control there is always violence over access to the phones. Usually the biggest, toughest and bullies rule. Many will use the phone to run business, control gangs or connect with multiple women they "use" to extort money and favors from. These gullible women think they're special, not realizing they are simply one in a lineup of 5 or more just being manipulated. My point is... these individuals will take over the phone for 2-hours a day, sometimes longer.

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So phone access is difficult sometimes. If your in a gang it's great, until a rival gang wants to take over. Everything's a hustle in prison. The officers (C/O's) have an easier job when gangs run things. Of course those in the gang will not pay and always have access priority. This only promotes "criminal" behavior in a persons life. Lessons that follow them back into the world. Out, David