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Hi Evy,

I always tell myself to focus on the positives. The new phone company, Century Link, has to make their money some way. They choose to get it from free world people because they have more resources.

I have my own account, I can call anyone I want, it does not cost me anything to deposit money, and all calls are 6¢ per minute plus tax. That comes to about \$1.30 for a 20 minute in-state call (under the old system, it was over \$2.50 for the same call). The new rate went into effect on July 16th. Out of state is slightly more because of more taxes. It's great for me. Other than the higher cost of depositing money, it should be the same for you. If not, you should consider having John open his own account and send the money to him to deposit (unless he has lots of court costs to pay - then they'll take 50% of everything you send him for that).

If you deposit \$100, that's close to 70 calls. I don't know about John, but I only call once or twice a week. Why would he need to call more than that? At twice a week, your \$100 should last 6 months.

There are annoying things about the new phones, such as having to say "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" in order to call anyone. The system frequently can't recognize my voice, making me repeat myself. And the sound quality is worse. It's so fuzzy I often can't understand anyone talking if they have their cellphone set on speakerphone. I told everyone I call not to set up an account - I dial direct which makes me feel less guilty about calling.

Thus far, your experience and mine have differed regarding the new phone system.

The real issue is what they're doing to the canteen - higher prices, poorer selection and worse service. They wanted to provide work and a revenue stream for BSI Industries so the prisoners have to pay the price (which means our families ultimately bear the cost). This is what you should be talking to legislators about.

TTYL  
Harlan