

**IOWA STATE SHERIFFS' & DEPUTIES' ASSOCIATION**



*To Serve and Protect the People of Iowa*

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August 9, 2019

Iowa Utilities Board  
1375 E. Court Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0069

Dear Members of the Board,

The Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association (ISSDA) would like your assistance with lowering the cost of telephone calls from Iowa jails. Currently, there are inmate phone providers in Iowa charging as much as \$14.10 for a 15-minute in-state phone call. The average 15-minute call from jail costs \$7.03, a sum that is just slightly under our state's minimum wage. In contrast, due to hard work when you were Lt. Governor, calls from state prisons in Iowa now cost only \$1.65 for a 15-minute phone call.

The high cost of calling home from Iowa jails puts unnecessary stress and burdens on the inmates and their families. Because these families are disproportionately low income, high costs limit their ability to stay in contact. High phone call costs are also counterproductive because research has demonstrated that family contact during incarceration decreases recidivism.

The state has taken major action to lower the cost of calling home from state prisons, and taken some smaller steps to lower the cost of calling home from county jails. The Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association believes that more action is needed and requests your involvement.

The Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association wrote to Governor Terry Branstad on March 17, 2017, to urge his support for the Iowa Utilities Board's (IUB) efforts to cap inmate telephone rates and fees (Docket

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No. RMU-2017-0004). Ultimately, the IUB declined to adopt the rate and fee caps we recommended but did require all Inmate Calling Service providers (also known as Alternative Operator Service providers), to file tariffs so that the IUB can determine if rates are fair and reasonable. These tariffs were filed in the Spring of 2019, but the IUB has not yet ruled.

The Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association urges you to work with the Iowa Utilities Board to ensure that Iowa families will no longer be required to pay unreasonable rates or unreasonable ancillary fees just to communicate with their incarcerated loved ones.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Jared M. Schneider  
ISSDA President