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PRISONS AND PRISONERS;



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INMATE PHONE CALLS

By: Christopher Reinhart, Senior Attorney

You asked for information about inmate phone calls.

SUMMARY

Currently, inmate phone calls must be made as collect calls in most Department of Correction (DOC) facilities. PA 02-104 required DOC to establish a pilot program to allow inmates to use a debit account or similar system to pay phone calls instead of collect calls.

The pilot program began on June 23, 2004 at the Brooklyn Correctional Institution and later expanded to Enfield Correctional Institution. The program allows people on an inmate's call list to set up an account where they can deposit money for calls instead of billing for collect calls.

According to DOC, the pre-paid calling system will be "rolled-out" to the remainder of DOC facilities effective August 1, 2007.

Attached is a recent *Hartford Courant* article on this topic (April 28, 2007).

CONTRACT FOR INMATE PHONE SERVICES

According to information provided by DOC, the contract for the inmate phone system with MCI/Verizon expired in July 2006. But the contract gave the state the option of extending the term with two one-year

extensions. DOC invoked the first extension, which expires July 2007, and intends to invoke the second, which will expire July 2008.

Since extending the contract, DOC and the Department of Information Technology (DOIT) submitted a request for information (RFI) to see what other vendors could offer for inmate phone systems. The RFI period ended April 13, 2007 and DOC is currently reviewing the information to better determine what vendor the state should negotiate with when the contract extension expires in July 2008.

Global Tel-Link will acquire the inmate phone system portion of the contract with MCI/Verizon on June 1, 2007. DOC states that this should not effect operations because the contract's terms and conditions remain in effect. Both the traditional collect calling and pre-paid collect calling system will be available through the remainder of the contract extensions. DOC states that the pre-paid collect calling system allows the inmate's friends and families to receive a 25% discount off traditional collect calling rates, when they deposit funds into a pre-paid account.

The state negotiated with MCI/Verizon to "roll-out" the pre-paid calling system to the remainder of the DOC facilities effective August 1, 2007.

MONEY FROM THE CONTRACT

DOIT receives the money from the MCI/Verizon contract. In FY 02 and FY 03, legislation transferred \$ 300,000 to DOC (SA 01-1) and starting with this fiscal year, DOC receives \$ 350,000 per year for inmate education and re-entry programs.

The table below shows information DOIT provided to DOC on commissions from inmate phone calls.

Contract for Inmate Phone Services	
<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Amount Received</i>
2004	\$ 5,611,836. 59
2005	5,386,936. 13
2006	4,536,103. 51

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