



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of Senate Bill 498
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 06, 2019**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports Senate Bill 498, which would prohibit jails and prisons from receiving a fee or other forms of payment for telephone services provided to people incarcerated in Oregon.

We view this bill as a commonsense way to reduce the cost of communication with the outside world for individuals incarcerated in Oregon's prisons and jails. Excessive charges and fees for calls from prison and jail create barriers to communication with loved ones, which is crucial to the health and well-being of incarcerated persons, their families and communities. In addition, significant charges for communication create disparities in our system, where poorer people are unable to communicate with their families and support networks as often or for as long as individuals with greater financial resources.

We understand, from reading testimony from the Department of Corrections and Sheriff's Association, that our correctional facilities may use funds from telephone calls to fund things that are needed by the facilities. If this is the case, we urge the legislature to find a different source of funds.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support Senate Bill 498. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 45,000 members and supporters statewide.