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This time of year it becomes ever more difficult to be away from family and friends. Despite our status as inmates, as criminals, we are human beings, as flawed and complicated, and in need of connection as the next. That being said, it can be understood how important the accessibility to make phone calls can be for inmates and their families, especially those with children. Incarceration affects not only those within the walls but those that love and miss their incarcerated family members. Not all inmates have access to funds allowing them to consistently make those essential calls. Currently we are provided two free phone calls per week with a duration of ten minutes each. For just a moment attempt to place yourself there, think about your family, your parents, or your children, think about close friends. Now imagine having only twenty minutes per week to stay connected with those you love. Imagine trying to work through a crisis such as a death or serious illness. Imagine family members on the other end of the line disconnected as the

automated system terminates the call on exactly the ten minute mark, sometimes without warning.

Many states, including our neighbor Massachusetts, have begun providing inmates calls free of charge. This decision has immeasurable positive effects on inmates and their families. We compel those in RI with the ability to implement these impactful changes to afford us this most basic and beneficial privilege. Mistakes we have made may be mitigated by the connections that remain between us and those we love.