



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF CORRECTIONS OMBUDS

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March 29, 2019

State Representative Strom Peterson
JLOB 324
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA
98504-0600

Dear Representative Peterson:

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to working toward a more safe, just, and humane corrections system! We recently discussed your interest in telecommunications for incarcerated persons. I offered to conduct a survey of family members of incarcerated persons and other interested parties to get a better understanding of the issues confronting them. As we know, maintaining strong family relationships is key to a successful reentry and reduction of recidivism.

I received 71 responses. I have pasted them in their entirety and without editing in the following pages. While many of the concerns are about the high rates of the calls, there are other issues that may be able to be addressed by DOC in its current contract negotiations. The following is a summary of the concerns:

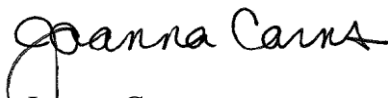
- High rates for all telecommunications
 - In particular, frustration and concern about the service fees charges on top of the rates. This may be an issue that can be addressed.
 - Related, GTL and/or JPAY is limiting the amount of money that can be placed on an inmate's account to only \$50 and charging a service fee each time. This may be an issue that can be addressed.
- Poor quality of service and product
 - Calls are dropped, are of poor quality, lack of audio, etc. It is unclear whether this is due to JPAY or DOC. This may require improving the DOC telecommunications infrastructure in order to address.
 - Emails take too long to process. This may be an issue that can be addressed by either increased staffing in the mailroom or by DOC reducing the list of words that automatically require a manual review.
 - JPAY tablets frequently break, the app is "glitchy," and users experience difficulty with the software to make accurate payments.

- Customer service from both GTL and JPAY seems to be lacking.
 - While not included in this survey, incarcerated individuals have reported that this is particularly true for them and that they are at the mercy of the companies in terms of getting responses and issues addressed in a timely fashion.

I appreciate your time in reviewing these responses and working to make changes to improve the system. Please let me know if you would like to meet to discuss them. In the meantime, I will share this with other interested legislators and work with DOC to address the issues that can be addressed on their end.

Thank you again for all that you do to improve corrections in Washington.

Sincerely,


Joanna Carns
Director

Responses

1. Cuts out drops calls weather affects service and standing outside during bad weather is not nice and shortens visit
2. My husband and I talk 2 to 3 times a day and sometimes more. More often than not our calls are plagued with problems. From the outgoing connection from him with repeat attempts, delays between recordings, up to a min to connect at times and the quality of the connection is broken and words are choppy 8 times out of 10. Sometimes I think I have been charged for a 1 min. call when we are having the huge delay when connecting. Sometimes the warning will say 60 seconds and then right away it will say 30 seconds and then disconnects. Tonight we were talking and it got real bad and then it disconnected us and it took 6 min. For him to get through again and heard a busy signal during that time. For the amount of money that we spend on the calls with so many fees to add money that you would think that we could have a good connection and well maintained equipment. We tried to video visit a few times and it was more aggravating than anything. The delays made it too difficult to have any flow in communication when the connection was so poor. I tried to get a refund and they would offer was a credit for another call. Jpay is nice but the fees are so high to transfer money and sometimes our messages take a 3 to 5 days and sometimes even a week to get through. I try to send him encouragement every morning and sometimes it could have been the everything that helped him through the day and he doesn't get it till days later. Also his games, pics and downloads have all been stuck in the cloud at times and when they get downloaded some go missing and it takes 2 to 3 weeks to resolve sometimes multiple help tickets with poor communication and resolution from the customer service department at jpay. All of the fees with poor services and hassles makes me feel ripped off and not wanting to use the services. The sad part about that is that the only one that really suffers in this is our loved ones. My husband is tired of waiting all day to talk to me and then have such a crappy call because of the poor connection and service. I hope our voices are heard on these issues and that we see change soon.

Lower fees and better quality services and connection. Thank you for reading about our experience.

3. Phone calls are extremely expensive. The email service and video visitation services fall far short of acceptable. The JPay app does not work correctly. About 90% of the time the video visits have no audio or do not connect at all. The videogram function and picture sending gets automatically rejected for reasons that are not accurate or even related to the picture at all.
4. I put money on my brother's phone card and also on my phone so he can call me without his paying for it. I do this by phone with a credit card. Usually that is not a problem but recently I tried to put money on his card and, even after 7 times of trying, the phone would cutoff and there would be a "busy signal sound". I tried calling the customer service number but there is now seemingly no way to get hold of a customer service person to explain the issue. Finally, the next day, I was able to put money on my brother's account. Better access to customer service is needed.

The JPay system for emails has worked fairly well. However, in the past two months or so (Jan. and Feb. 2019), I have had issues with going on to compose a message to my brother

but part or all of the last message I sent him is there even though I sent it and he received it. I tried to delete it on these occasions, but it would not delete. I would have to log out and try later.

5. Video visiting never works and is expensive. Having the ability to put money on multiple accounts spendable, education, medical, postage etc. Without separate fees. Working kiosks and phones. More educational options, books, movies. Faster delivery of messages. The cost of calls could be cheaper. Stamps are pretty good just a lot for video's
6. Phone call quality has been good - no complaints, but the rates are outrageous considering that nobody pays for state to state phone calls anymore. 50% commission to DOC, which is millions of dollars, and lack of transparency on what this money goes towards is concerning. With the way current contracts are structured with JPay and GTL, I have to question DOC's desire and incentive to hold these vendor companies accountable to perform good quality services for the incarcerated and their families. JPay service, on the other hand, could use a lot of improvement. Video visits are not working, the technology is ancient and has not been replaced or upgraded in years. The list goes on. Thank you, Representative Peterson and the OCO for giving us the opportunity to speak up. Happy to provide more info if needed.
7. On average our family spends \$150 a month for 40 min a day to talk with our loved one. Emails after a certain number, roughly when above 168 messages start disappearing and can not be retrieved. Video visits have all been fails, dropped connection, bad reception and no use of phones for video chat limits the type of people who can use the video visit. Video grams are uneditable, unsaveable, and we can't send something prerecorded that can be trimmed, so in the instance we record something and send it there have been a number of times it has failed and the video get deleted, we have no way to retry if the program fails.

There is a limit of \$50 that can be sent to families even though this should be \$150 for state of WA. And the charges for depositing money are astronomical. Especially when DOC at minimum already takes 20% - 90%

Phones have been choppy, sometimes mimicking every word or one side can't be heard.

I look forward to the changes and am willing to be flexible I would like this to be resolved soon as possible as it is impacting a great number of families and has been in the top 3 topics for every meeting the last 2 years that I have been active with the council.

8. My family have spent a small fortune on phone calls and emails over the years my sister has been incarcerated. My parents are elderly and cannot visit often so the phone calls are vital to keep their connection to her strong. The emails are ridiculous...expensive, and unreliable.
9. Cheaper phone calls and video visits....emails should be processed quicker. Anything longer than one paragraph takes days to receive from an inmate or vice versa....we are humans they need to quit making huge \$\$\$\$\$ off people who already pay ungodly costs for feeding their loved ones.....respectfully yours A Proud Wife of an inmate!!!
10. Jpay is so expensive and not everyone can use it phones need to be replaced in some areas there tends to be a lot of static or dropped calls or you can barely hear them

11. I spend at least \$2400 a year on phone calls to my husband normally only talking to him twice a day. 2-20 minute phone calls a day to stay on budget. Phone calls are horrible half the time going in and out or disconnecting. We no longer do video visits with jpay because the delay was horrible if and when I could hear him and 99% we couldn't hear each other. I spend an additional probably \$20 month on emails and ecards or music n games. That's an additional \$240 a year on top of the \$2400 so that's at least \$2640 total a year. That is ridiculous!!! That's taking away money that I need to pay my bills. A cell phone with unlimited texting and calling is way less than that. The jpay tablets are always breaking down or having issues. We should be able to pay a flat monthly fee for phone calls and jpay period and it be unlimited.
12. My experience is horrible. We get double charged for taxes and fees. I get charged when I put money on the accounts wether it's phone or books and then my husband gets taxed as well. Double jeopardy which is not ok at all. This needs to stop. I should not be penalized because my husband did something to get in there. I am innocent and I pay my taxes already.
13. It was extremely expensive to keep up on the JPay funds for emails, sending pics and especially the videos because they cost the most. Plus the initial cost of the JP4 player for the incarcerated person. The phone calls were also a huge expense but a necessity to stay close to one another. I struggled to pay for all of these things while my husband was incarcerated in order to keep our relationship strong and so that our girls could talk to their dad in some way almost everyday. The high costs of all these things seems predatory since we as loved ones are already in a vulnerable state with the separation of our family and of course want to do everything we can to stay connected. There should definitely be a cap on what phone calls can cost, and lowering the price for videos and picture sending would be helpful. Most importantly, I know that not everyone is able to figure out a way to pay for these things and because of this they loose connection with family and other supports that are essential to help them break the cycle of recidivism when the are released.
14. JPAY: Astronomical fees for phones, email, and music downloads take advantage of people who are trying to stay connected to their loved ones Music player not functioning with no response from the company for over 14 days. In Florida, when their DOC switched vendors, every single music download they had was suddenly gone. They had to rebuild their music library from scratch. So please be mindful of this!

UNION SUPPLY: Does not stock items that are specific to women. Has told the tier rep group at WCCW that "there aren't enough incarcerated women to make it worth their while to stock items that are gender specific." Women must order their shoes from the men's page. Hygiene products are substandard. Food is unhealthy.

CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES: As far as I can tell, this government agency is the "contractor" for food. In the last three months, fresh produce and salads have vanished. I requested information on the new menus and the nutritional value of food and was told to file a PDC request.

15. Phone calls at peak times cut out severely and we cant hear each other. It would also be nice if the reminder for 60 seconds and 30 seconds left only played one time, maybe only for the 30 second warning. Emails ARE SOOOOO SLOW I get some immediately and others take 7 or 8 days sometimes, which is ridiculous. I should just use the post office and be

guaranteed delivery in 2-3 days. Emails are also too monitored for romantic talk. These are men who should be allowed to express their desires to their wives or girlfriends ESPECIALLY around Valentine's day. We don't have very much contact in general, so sometimes a few words are all we need to feel close to our loved one. If there are no sex crimes and both parties are consenting adults, let people communicate and express themselves. I also feel that the mail room might single out people and make their JPay message review process slower than it should be. Hire more staff or relax a little bit on the types of language you flag.

16. Not receiving emails, video visits not working, jpay not letting me attach photos, kiosk down for months, GTL dropping calls, phone broken, can't hear clearly, jpay and GTL not following their contracts, so hard to stay connected with the little communication we have not being reliable or dependable. Tired of them taken our money yet not providing adequate services.

17. GTL app is very glitchy. Sometimes it will decline my payment, but that payment will still go through my bank account. Other times it won't allow me to put money on the phone due to app issues.

JPay is slow. Sometimes it takes a week to receive an email. It won't attach pictures to emails in the app at all. The email notifications of mail take hours or days sometimes to come through.

Also, the censorship seems very random at times. Very benign sentences will be taken out of correspondence. Other times, the same sentence can go through.

18. The fees they both charge for service is outrageous. The apps they both have fail to work to add money etc. and they do not have tech people to troubleshoot these issue as each time one tries takes numerous attempts. If you put caps on their prices, they will raise the transaction fee for that service to recoup more money. Additionally, there is a phone connection problem at Coyote Ridge wherein static etc takes over phone conversation, wasting phone time and the money expended not being able to hear.

19. I had a problem with GTL...after 15 yrs. of collect calls GTL decided to block my calls after I ran up \$20 in collect calls...and they wanted me to buy a phone card from them..they have done this with alot of family , and the get a fee every time you put money on the card...they tryed to tell me the reason for this is the phone company didn't want to collect for a third party call (wrong) I contact my phone company and they said they had no problem..so I made contact with the head rep. of Wa., she told me after we went round and round that is the way the company is going, and I told her they had no right to block my calls only DOC and the phone co. could, and I was going to the federal commision about them, she got back to me and said they raised my number up to \$150 before the block ..FYI I have never run my calls up to that amount..what burns me is they are doing this to other families and you need one card per each person (so Mom and Dad Have to have a card, Aunt & Uncle & Grandma) you get the idea..they are ripping families off for more money, when they block you they have you call a 800 number and they say this is the only way you can speak to your love one...it is a terrible...hope this help..thank you

20. Never have been able to access video visits due to lack of upgraded equipment to meet the standards for visits.

Phone calls have been essentially good, with issues of them being cut off for 3-way calls due to background noises. Prices are reasonable.

Emails have been the best form of communication. Pricing is reasonable but wi-fi is spotty. It also takes considerably longer to get the messages in or out if they have more than one line of text. Upgraded wi-fi at the facility would help.

21. Some calls drop, get hung up before the 20 minutes, or go silent in the middle of a call. I Ins that the rates are better. Haven't used video visitation and emails are moving much faster than they used to
22. I spend thousands of dollars a year on prison phone calls. It is killing me financially. I've already sent Rep. Peterson my feedback in text form, but one additional thing I did not send him is that you all should review the text of the JPay User Agreement and see what raises alarm bells for you. For example, there is some clause in it that allows JPay to change the terms at will. The user agrees that the user agreement can change anytime JPay wants to change it, basically, which doesn't seem like much of an agreement at all. It's like signing a lease in which the landlord says, "Renter agrees that lease can change at landlord's whim" instead of having any clear temporal or financial terms.
23. No issues with phone calls except having the phones in a quiet room instead of where inmates can be standing around visiting to make it hard to hear. Email is okay except when sending videos - sometimes it takes several days for it to get to the inmate.
24. Jpay Video Visit--was attempted four months ago. I am still awaiting refund as the audio didn't work. I have submitted multiple emails and called multiple times. Each refers me to the other option (email response says to call, customer services tells me to send an email). GTL: I used to be able to deposit \$200 at a time and incur one fee. Now I have to do four separate deposits and incur fees for each
25. I stop soing video visots alond time ago. Thwy always go wrong 7/10 times. I write paper letters more then jpay becasue i feel its a rip off and paper letters get delivered faster. Its supposed to be more convenient but its a major expense that most have difficulty affording yet its qualities are horrible
26. Video visits are unreliable and jpay does not offer refunds, calls get dropped or have poor quality and gtl will not issue a refund. If you do request an investigation and they don't find anything wrong you pay a fine. Family do not get jpay rejection notices and there is no oversight or warnings when accounts get suspended. GTL charges unreasonable fees and caps the max amount you can add to your phone account so they can maximize profit (\$5 fee per \$50 transaction).
27. Phone calls are through GTL - no complaints. It would be nice to see a reduce of fees.

Jpay - horrible return customer service, service failures for over 6 months - without fix. Still no clear fix to JPAY kiosk in FOX Unit at WSP even though working with FL reps - no commitment to service. Response none - until WSP Officisls were Cc'd still no fix. Please contact me to discuss actual details [redacted email] I'm in Edmonds Strom .

JPAY Email - excessive delays in receiving, no confirmation, Phone App has several issues.
Update today
Stayed

* General Bug Fixes - what is that ??

No history of snap & send pictures available. A receipt notification system needs to be in place - and an ability to see email replies so you can tell what email is being replied to - the option for reply is there, so you think the recipient can tell but no. Based on the delayed receipt of " up to 48 hrs" but more like 1-11 days is not a standard operations bonus. So many issues that during face to face meeting at WSP no answers no accountability.

Meeting April 2nd WSP Family Council

JPAY repack to visit for 2nd time to respond to our questions.

Would you like to attend ?

Helpful!

28. In addition to my previous email

Concern about the % of commission received by DOC for contract use

And what the use of funds are currently going towards. My understanding is it goes to benefit Offender Fund ... Family Council would benefit input to such use of funds.

The tablet issues are not noted above but concern over product, product limited warranty and Offender response timelines to issues.

Software is outdated

Service of Kiosks & Technology updates need to be monitored more closely - freedom for failure not fix is my perspective in the short 11 months I have been exposed to.

I would be willing to help and support change to programs.

We have a contract specialist on Family Council that would be beneficial to be part of any changes (we know RFP is going out and goal to be completed by December 2019

Families have the most to win or lose. In this arena - we should be involved in the process. Thank you for your support and assistance.

[redacted name and telephone number]

29. I have had a lot of experience with outrageous costs for phone calls from prison until they got it down to the current charge. Still the jails still have high rates and it puts an extra burden on family on the outside. Many of us are unable to travel to visit often due to financial or medical reasons and this is an undue hardship. I have had really good experience with J pay however---sometimes getting the message to inmate and answer on the same day I sent message which is phenomenal.

30. Phone calls themselves are good but the process of placing money on accounts has been difficult using the internet which you can place 200\$ on their phone vs the telephone method which only 50 is maximum. There's bugs in their system not allowing the use of the keyboard while putting the value of purchase in the provided box .

JPay has been horrible with email . Some have taken up to two weeks for receipts .

Pictures alone a week . It's incredibly inconvenient anymore to email someone and they don't get it for a week plus .

Regarding video visits they are horrible , they never work , either the kiosk has an issue with its microphone or camera, the kiosk is down , trying to recoup your payment for a video visit is cumbersome And takes several attempts. This has been an on going issue with me .
I think For the fees they charge and the volume they bring in they could do a better job all around .
Thank you .

31. UPDATE phones! We pay ALOT for phone calls and some of that money should going towards new updated equipment. NOT employees paychecks like it currently is right now.
32. I experience phone calls from Stafford Creek with transmission issues at least 50% of the time. The transmission issues vary. Some are severe, some are not. I am told that GTE's fees are a hardship to many family members.
JPay has so many issues it is difficult to know where to start the list. Two-way communication with JPay is difficult at best. If an inmate has a problem with their tablet (which is most of the time), and it is reported to JPay, it takes forever to get a response and they are not allowed to submit another issue until the first one is responded to. Most of the time, according to JPay, the problem is user error or with the facility. The tablets are cheaply made and are failing much sooner than a tablet on the outside fails. Then a new tablet must be purchased. Our loved one spends money on music or games and then cannot download them. Or a game they pay for doesn't work and it takes multiple submissions to get resolution - if at all. If a Kiosk is not functioning, it takes forever to get it fixed as JPay only has one technician in Washington State to fix IT problems. (This may have changed by now). Whenever I have contacted JPay, I was told the issues were because the facility needed an upgrade or it was user error. My nephew's tablet battery was so hot, the tablet started to melt and was taken away from him as the guard was afraid it would cause a fire. Now he does not have a tablet. JPay says it is out of warranty but the date he was given corresponds to his first tablet, not the one that overheated. I have a letter from my nephew stating all of his issues and frustrations that I would like to forward to you, if you want it. I haven't had any issues with the JPay email system. I haven't used video so cannot address the issues associated with it. Overall, their fees seem to be much too high for the services (or lack of) that they provide. Thank you
33. First, the phone: The phone quality is often poor.
There is static or you can't hear all of what each other is saying.
We are cut off for "third party call" when no such thing happened.
Somtimes the phones just shut off
sometimes the introduction to the call doesn't complete so that you can connect or you keep pressing 5 to connect and nothing happens. every evening the phones don't have good connections starting about 8pm
They don't let you put more than \$50 on the phone at a time and each time you have to pay 4.95 just to put money on your phone.

JPAY: It takes too long for emails to get back and forth.
the video never works
the kiosk is often down
It dumpeds pictures and emails on it's own
34. Video visitation was ok, but hard to see. Getting setup was the biggest problem. Email can take a couple days or more to arrive. Sometimes are out of order.

Phone periodically goes out of order to, in which the person might have to call 2 or 3 times before you can talk to them. Given the circumstances I don't have any suggestions....this is all technology and maybe putting more technology in to support current system.

35. Our family maintains regular phone contact with our loved one - daily. This daily contact costs \$2.20 for every 20 minutes. We consider this contact to be fundamentally important to our loved one's ability to cope with his circumstances and to return to society healthier. Collectively, three of us spend almost \$400 per month to do this. We are in favor of a cap on the cost of telephone calls. Video visits through JPay would be great, but are cost prohibitive and almost never technically possible - I.e., audio only works one way, or the screen freezes, or visit cuts off midway. It takes weeks to get a refund and requires much "hold time" on the phone. Email is more affordable, but limited in length. We support the bill as written.
36. We have tried 2 times to video chat with our son. But could only see each other, it was very hard not being able to hear each other. It was very frustrating especially considering the distance that is between us. We have wanted to send it up so he could see his grandparents, but because of the sound have not done so. Because of their age it very difficult for them to travel to physically see him. Would really appreciate this issue being fixed.
37. The system is far to expensive. Phone calls can be bad quality and disconnect haphazardly. I've only had one video visit since I've moved out of WA. Unfortunately the angle of the camera on my loved ones side did not allow for a good view of his face. Instead I was mostly looking at the top of his head. For the price we have to pay to have a video visit I should at least be able to look the other person in the eyes.
38. JPAY has occasional disconnections, video does not work properly or if sending via email does not get sent. Size limitation on photos is an issue. SCCC reports phone issues more common than not. Do know that offenders are frustrated. However, services that span multiple facilities and locations will experience technical/service issues just due to the overall capacity of the servers. Hopefully in time, JPAY will invest in their infrastructure to support their customers needs.
39. I have been using JPay to communicate with my daughter for a little under four years.

I have been sending her money regularly although we do use money orders also. About three months ago out of the blue I started getting charged \$10 per transaction on my credit card. I know that there is a preamble on the JPay page saying this could happen. I called the credit card company and they said JPay was coding the charge a different way. JPay told me that it was the credit cards fault and they were charging it differently. I tried it with all my credit cards . Same issues. Sounds like JPay changed the code.

I trust the credit card companies more than JPay. Some, I have been with for over 25 years. So now to send \$20 it costs me \$10 on my credit card and the 3.95 JPay fee. Hardly worth it. Very inconvenient.

I told my incarcerated loved one about this opportunity to express concerns and she asked me to tell this Office that she has purchased music and has not been able to retrieve it. For many songs; about \$35 worth, it continues to spin and say 'fetching'. She said within the facility of WCCW this is a chronic issue and causing frustration.

Also, we were told before Christmas that there was WIFI there now and messages would come quicker. For a while it was great! Not now. Slow and unpredictable again.

GTL, same thing. Worked perfectly and I was able to charge it on my phone on the go only paying a \$3 fee to put \$100 on. Perfect. All of a sudden in the last few months none of my credit cards will work. All declined. I own a business so we use all these credit cards regularly every day multiple times. They are good cards. I called GTL and talked with five separate people over a period of weeks spending at least 5 hours on the phone. Each time they assured me the problem had been taken care of. Now all I can do is call the 800 number and put the money on the inmate account for a charge of \$4.65 for \$50. (Interesting how my "declined" cards work in this manner.) I can no longer access the PIN account. They cannot tell me why this changed and they reassure me that it will work every time I call. I have no more patience for GTL or JPay.

I wish there was another company for both services that I can use. At least some competition would maybe make them try a little harder.

I feel like I'm being punished.

40. Phone costs and trying to have phone contact when incarcerated individuals is so hard to navigate when they move them back and forth for court dates. Every institution uses a different phone system. They should be able to have one phone card that can be used no matter where they are.
41. Went in there not knowing what i could and could not do. Was never told how/when i could use the phones or how to order from commissary and didn't know I had a right to kite the nurse regarding the medications I was supposed to currently be taking. I went without meds for two weeks. I also didnt know how to contact my attorney. My bunk mates phone minutes kept getting stolen by other cellmates. I couldn't even get the gaurd to give me a clean pair of underwear after I started my period and bled all over the only pair I had and couldn't take them off and handwash them because i would have had nothing else to hold my pad into place. That is so unsanitary! I begged the gaurd to help me out! I'm also 100% deaf in my right ear which caused issues with other cellmates because if I was asleep I couldn't hear them call for meals or any other orders she called out. My belongings like my whole purse that contained my debit cards I.D. cell phone, car and work keys were also stolen during my arrest and my accounts were all drained (police report on file) and nobody seems to know what happened to my stuff even though i begged them not to leave my purse behind because it contained my son's SSI debit card that had money on it for survivor benefits after losing his father. That account was drained while I was incarcerated. I tracked down the ATM it was withdrew from but police won't investigate it even though there is camera's at the ATM. We never got reimbursed by SSI for identity theft. They also charged the debit card to look up my credit history and information for identity theft purposes. All of that, and I wasnt even guilty of what they tried to charge me of. I was in the wrong place, at the wrong time. The system failed me.
42. The cost of phone calls were ridiculous
43. We've had so many issues. The video visits are all choppy, he we can't hear each other most of the time, it freezes, etc. It makes for a very frustrating conversation with your loved one. Phone calls are just as bad. Fading in and out of being able to hear him, three-way call alerts

when there wasn't any. There should be an option to extend the call instead of him having to call back. It's ridiculous how much we are charged to load the phone. Almost \$5 for every \$50? It adds up quickly. Monthly call plans should be established. Our relationships mean the world to us, and we are charged so much for every aspect. Relief on phone call costs would make a big difference.

44. The App for Jpay doesn't send us notifications. They are Super slow. The phone calls are also bad connections.
45. Phone resources are insufficient (not enough phones). Phone call quality is very poor. Video visitation doesn't work (no sound, JPay kiosk down for weeks on end). Approximately 50% of the images and videos I send are denied for frivolous reasons which do not reflect mailroom policy (examples: one video was denied for violence because I said "fuck." I have had three videos wearing extremely oversized clothing denied for "sexually explicit content." I cannot show my bare back from the waist up without any suggestive posing. I cannot show my entire video in a videogram at all, wearing a baggy sweatshirt and sweatpants without it being denied for "sexually explicit content.") There is frequently a 3-4 day delay on emails which primarily discuss innocuous topics such as exercise routines or similar. I generally receive messages once per day in a large batch.
46. Emails taking forever send and get
47. The phone system is ridiculous. We get charged so much for it. They say it's 11 cents per minute but when you actually figure out mathematically it's a lot more due to the taxes and the other fees they charge. It's horrible and needs to be changed as they are doing fails advertising and point blank lying to everyone. With JPay they again are lying to us as families. We get taxed on our money when we work and yet we get taxed again when we put money on our loved ones accounts and phones. That's not right at all. They charge so many extra fees that leaves our loved ones with basically nothing by the time they get the money. JPay is also horrible because you send an email to your loved one and you don't even receive it until a week later. Why is that considered email instant. We are not in 20th century anymore. Ahhh there is so much more I could say ..
48. Calls not connecting.
49. Phone calls are horrible, most of the time we can't hear each other, video visitations are even worse, we are always cut off after about 5 minutes in and have to restart it again, that usually happens several times in just 1 video visit. Emails take forever to be sent, sometimes it takes a week to even receive what my fiancé sends to me and him mine as well. I feel with all the money I spend for these services they should be in working order at all times, but sadly that's not the case, and when I ever call to make a complaint with either JPay or GTL I am most of the time rudely spoken to. The only reason I have not stopped using these services is because it's my only contact with my fiancé through the week.
50. Calls/messages are expensive and of poor quality, messages take days to weeks to go through.
51. The email can take weeks or fly right through. Phone calls might say 3 way calling and the phone call ends. Don't know why it says that. Notifications for email would be nice.

52. I feel it would be great if the phone calls can reduce in price. If they were cheaper more calls could happen and this is what we look forward too. As well the video visit I feel if we can fix it a little because I can barely hear. Maybe doing yearly maintenance on them a couple times! With emails I'm not sure what the process is but it sucks sometimes it takes 2-3 days to delivery an email! If you can maybe screen them to go at least with 6 hours of being written.
53. Calls and video visit are very expensive. Email takes several days sometimes
54. I use jpay as a form of communication to a Washington inmate. The emails now take days, sometimes weeks to deliver. Notifications are no longer being received and if they are they are several days behind. Most emails come in between 11pm-3am and they all come in at once. There's no way to have a conversation like this. Our jpay use has definitely slowed down and may eventually stop due to the long period of time to send and receive an email that used to take 30 mins.
55. Video visitation is a VERY POOR application. I've stopped using that feature of JPay altogether. More often than not, there is poor connectivity. Usually, the system will die in the middle of the visit, although there are a few times I've been able to finish a 30-minute visit. The Jpay help desk blames it on CRCC; CRCC blames it on Jpay. Nobody takes responsibility or ownership. CRCC doesn't seem to care--the guys are just inmates so what does it matter; Jpay continues to get paid whether or not the service is good so it's great for them. The Send Money feature is OK, although I think they (Jpay) charge too much and did you know that DOC only gives the inmate 65% of what is sent unless they have child support or other obligations--and then they get way less?? It would be nice to know how the money that DOC keeps is spent. Seemingly not on the health and welfare of the inmates. My son is still waiting to get two teeth filled after TWO YEARS. I use the email feature which is OK, but unbelievably slow. Often it takes a week to get an email. Representative Peterson, if you can make any improvements in the way our guys are treated, I'll vote for you if you're in my district. We need CHANGE for our loved ones. Thank you for listening.
56. Video JPay Kiosk in the prisons are always down and it makes it hard for those of us who live out of state to keep in touch with our loved ones. Customer Service doesn't respond for 5 to six months. Messages are not delivered in a timely manner, sometimes messages are delayed up to a week. The fees on JPay to give our loved ones money are extremely high. Why can't it be one fee for everything thing? \$7.95 fee for money on his spendable is just way too high. I understand the facilities all have wifi, but I'm not sure why? Messages are not being delivered, they still have to plug in to the kiosk to download messages or pictures. Could it be possible for inmates to record video messages from their players and send them to their loved ones? Some facilities back East provide this service.
57. Each phone call has to end early due to so much static on phone at Coyote Ridge that my inmate cannot hear me. GTL needs a website tech to fix issues associated with adding funds. My Inmate calls more now because the average wait time I get his emails is eight plus days.
58. The last few months Jpay emails are taking hours to reach eachother? Even short emails that use to take less then 2hrs are taking all day before we get them. Also I a not getting any notifications.
59. [redacted email address]

60. They phones need to be upgraded or something because they started messing up to often during phone calls. Emails are slow. If there is a faster way to process them that would be great. When the phones don't work all some of us have is emails. There is something always wrong with the audio during video visits and lowering the cost of the video gram would be great. Video grams are rejected for silly reasons and yet we are not refunded.
61. The phone calls are extremely expensive and of poor quality. The connection is crappy, hard to hear eachother and connection is lost alot. The emails can take 30days to reach us and the notifications have been nonexistent for months now. The pictures are of really poor quality as well coming from the prisons. Staying connected is so important but the costs and quality make it very hard on us. Gtl and jpay blame DOC for equipment failure and DOC blames Gtl and jpay. Nothing seems to get fixed.
62. I use email and for the past 36 hours I haven't received ANYTHING even though he said he has emailed several times.
63. Phone calls should be longer than 20 minutes
Video visitation should be less expensive
In person visits should never be displaced by video visits
Incarcerated individuals should have increased opportunities for communication
Family and community contact should be encouraged and valued as a part of the success of every individual and the success of the mission of DOC
64. Jpay delays. Sometimes Ill get multiple letters on time then get a random one that was sent a month ago. Jail phone call prices in ny county are far too high.
65. Primarily concerned with quality and maintenance of phone system. Dropped calls, bad connections and phones that don't work within facilities. Wholeheartedly support limits on phone charges & DOC commissions. Affordable contact with family support systems are essential to inmate rehabilitation.
66. Jpay is charging me a fee of \$3.95 to send my nephew \$10. That is excessive.
67. Emails take over a week to receive on both ends. Photos approved then disappeared never reimbursed. Photos and videos denied for wearing tank top. I've banned using jpay. The fees are ridiculous.
68. Yesterday, I tried once again to send money via Jpay to my husband's spendable account. Jpay gave me a confirmation number, but in the account the transactions shows "pending." In my bank credit card account, the amount shows as a "pending transaction." I emailed Jpay. No reply yet.
This morning (03/11/19) I called Jpay and spoke with Gina. After verifying my name, phone number, date of birth, and address, she looked at my transaction. She could see that the transaction was "successful", in her words, the card was accepted, but it still showed "pending." So, she transferred me to her financial department. I waited on hold. Eventually, someone picked up the line (the repeated recording telling me I could go to their website was interrupted) and then disconnected the call.
20 minutes on the phone. No resolution to the problem. No call back.
This is typical Jpay customer service.

Western Union worked. I paid their fee and sent my son some money.

69. Jpay and the phone systems are unreliable. Right now even with the app it wont allow stamp purchase etc w/out location on... why do I have to share my location? That's dumb. Also I no longer get an alert of new messages. Its should have an auto save feature as well. Messages can be delayed for DAYS or come almost immediate without reasoning. Additionally the jpay picture quality is contingent with the side your inmate is on...one side is horrific and grainy while others are great. The phone system should be set to a monthly plan. Not to mention the crappy call quality on many phones inside. I'm also frustrated by the # of times I've had calls disconnect for imaginary 3 way calls or huge delays in the recordings or calls just drop. Service issues on both result in finger pointing from provider blaming the prison and vice versa. We pay good many for this... We deserve standard quality.
70. I have less complaints about GTL than JPay. GTL sometimes lags and has trouble accepting calls when it is having glitches. I have noticed this most often happens later in the evening before lock up. Perhaps this is because more inmates are on the phone at that time and the system is getting overloaded or perhaps a reboot of phones during count would help. I'm not sure.

JPay, I have recently had a bad experience with a videogram and several with video visits. Emails are very delayed in getting through as well, but that may be due to staff at facilities having to look through so many emails.

To summarize - I sent a videogram Feb 24th that was never received by my loved one. We were waiting and waiting and got no notice of a decline. He also informed me of someone else in his unit waiting 3 weeks, so we just thought it was really delayed. I finally called Stafford Creek today and spoke to Sargeant Wilkinson in charge of everything Jpay. He took his time to look it up and said it was released to my loved one 2 days after I sent it and there is nothing he can do to resend it. I spoke to Jpay again and they said they also cannot resend it and only advised to tell my loved one to create an escalation ticket to inmate support which will go to Wilkinson who can do nothing. It took me 30 minutes to try and get a 5 stamp credit for a video that was never received due to error and no solution which is really frustrating, especially since you can only send live videos and I have no way of resending it from that special day. It clearly is a glitch on Jpay's side.

I am seriously thinking of discontinuing jpay. I am so tired of making calls to their customer service. They have the money to hire better developers. JPay's video visits are useful since I'm long distance in Chicago and emails are useful when my loved one has cell confinement or if there is a lockdown. But I haven't had a jpay video visit in months due to the machine constantly being down in my loved one's pod in unit GA at Stafford Creek. We actually haven't been able to have one at all since he was transferred there from Walla Walla. I've made so many calls about it and the inmates have put in so many tickets to no avail. Blame gets pushed around from jpay to the facility but it's jpay's faulty technology and software that is to blame and their lack of investment in quality developers. It is not right that company greed is draining loved ones accounts of incarcerated individuals who are often poor and struggling to help their loved ones. The fees are another topic that is also outrageously high. If it was more affordable and better quality, more loved ones would use the services.

71. *we are unable to hear each other using video visit. (all volume and microphone controls are set to maximum, and after pre testing of the microphone & camera, the equipment on my end works very well)

*video visit times set as available are in actuality unavailable, ie during shift change, midnight.

*phone calls cut out

*"3 way call alert" is set off when using a blue tooth device, and/or when paired with a vehicle, causing the call to disconnect

*service charge fees are exorbitant

*emails are not in reverse chronological order when attempting to "retrieve older messages" ie from todays date, then to 8/2018- 6/2018, then to 8/2017. (there was no lapse in his time incarcerated or when he had access to emailing)