



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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Chair

ANTHONY M. BORELLI
District Manager

November 4, 2005

Hon. Joseph L. Bruno
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, New York, 12247

Re: Inmate Telephone Service

Dear Senator Bruno:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 joins with Brooklyn Community Board No. 2 in opposing the current contractual arrangement between the New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) and MCI for inmate telephone service. (See enclosed letter from Bklyn CB2 dated 7/5/05)

As reported by The New York Campaign for Telephone Justice, MCI charges families of incarcerated people a rate that is 630 percent more than the average customer for collect calls from inmates (phone calls can only be made collect). We also understand that New York State receives a payment representing 57.5 percent of MCI's profits, resulting in \$175 million in revenue since the contract began in 1996. It is wrong for MCI to charge, and for DOCS to profit from, inflated rates for telephone service between inmates and their families.

Furthermore, the practice seems counter-productive to the long term objective of decreasing recidivism. As we all know, many New York City prison inmates are shipped to upstate correctional facilities, sometimes near the Canadian border, hundreds of miles from where they reside. This imposes severe hardship on families and loved ones in their efforts to maintain family cohesion. Positive telephone contact helps these inmates maintain psychological equilibrium and familial participation, can avert violent behavior, and help promote reintegration efforts following release. It is unconscionable that any communications provider would exploit these factors for financial gain or that the state would cooperate with, and benefit from, such a plan.

On November 2, 2005 the Board voted to express its opposition to the contract for inmate telephone service between DOCS and MCI. We are pleased that the Assembly has acted positively on this matter, in passing A7231. We encourage you to support passage of the companion measure, S.5299. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Lee Compton
Chair, Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Kenneth Brambill
Co-Chair
Housing, Health & Human Services Committee

Janice McGuire
Co-Chair
Housing, Health & Human Services Committee

Encl.