

STATE OF NEW YORK

3096

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 22, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. EPSTEIN, QUART, SIMON -- read once and referred to the Committee on Correction

AN ACT to amend the correction law, in relation to providing voice communication service to incarcerated people at no cost

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 623 of the correction law, as added by chapter 240
2 of the laws of 2007, is amended to read as follows:

3 § 623. [~~Inmate telephone~~] Voice communication services for incarcerated
4 ed people.

5 1. [~~Telephone~~] Voice communication services contracts for [~~inmates~~]
6 incarcerated people in state correctional facilities shall be subject to
7 the procurement provisions as set forth in article eleven of the state
8 finance law [~~provided, however, that when determining the best value of~~
9 ~~such telephone service, the lowest possible cost to the telephone user~~
10 ~~shall be emphasized~~].

11 2. [~~The department shall make available either a "prepaid" or "collect~~
12 ~~call" system, or a combination thereof, for telephone service. Under the~~
13 ~~"prepaid" system, funds may be deposited into an account in order to pay~~
14 ~~for station-to-station calls, provided that nothing in this subdivision~~
15 ~~shall require the department to provide or administer a prepaid system.~~
16 ~~Under a "collect call" system, call recipients are billed for the cost~~
17 ~~of an accepted telephone call initiated by an inmate. Under such~~
18 ~~"collect call" system, the provider of inmate telephone service, as an~~
19 ~~additional means of payment, must permit the recipient of inmate calls~~
20 ~~to establish an account with such provider in order to deposit funds to~~
21 ~~pay for such collect calls in advance~~] State and local agencies charged
22 with the operation and management of state and local correctional facil-
23 ities and juvenile detention facilities shall provide persons in their
24 custody and confined in a correctional or detention facility with voice
25 communication service at a minimum of ninety minutes per day and ensure

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 sufficient infrastructure to meet this baseline. The commissioner may
2 supplement voice communication service with other advanced communication
3 services, including, but not limited to, video communication and elec-
4 tronic mail services. To the extent that the commissioner provides such
5 voice communication service or any other advanced communication service,
6 each such service shall be provided free of charge to the person initi-
7 ating and the person receiving the communication.

8 3. ~~[The department shall not accept or receive revenue in excess of~~
9 ~~its reasonable operating cost for establishing and administering such~~
10 ~~telephone system services as provided in subdivisions one and two of~~
11 ~~this section]~~ No state or local agency shall receive revenue from the
12 provision of voice communication services or any other communication
13 services to any person confined in a state or local correctional or
14 detention facility.

15 4. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit, replace or
16 prevent in-person visitation between persons confined in a state or
17 local correctional or detention facility and relatives, friends or any
18 other persons approved to visit such person.

19 5. The department shall establish rules and regulations or depart-
20 mental procedures to ensure that any ~~[inmate phone call system]~~ voice
21 communication services for incarcerated people established by this
22 section provides reasonable security measures to preserve the safety and
23 security of each correctional facility, all staff and all persons
24 outside a facility who may receive ~~[inmate phone calls]~~ communications
25 for incarcerated people.

26 § 2. This act shall take effect April 1, 2021 and shall apply to any
27 new or renewal contract for voice communications for incarcerated people
28 or other advanced communication services entered into on or after such
29 date and provided further that any new or renewal contract for voice
30 communications for incarcerated people or other advanced communication
31 services entered into prior to April 1, 2021 shall not run past March
32 31, 2021.