

JAN 19 2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INCARCERATED PERSONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the families of
2 incarcerated persons often struggle financially, which makes
3 phone fees especially burdensome. The legislature also finds
4 that eliminating phone fees for incarcerated persons is a matter
5 of economic equity, as the fees disproportionately burden
6 families with lower incomes. The legislature further finds that
7 regular contact with family members increases the likelihood
8 that incarcerated persons will be able to reintegrate into
9 society after their sentences have concluded.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
11 department of corrections and rehabilitation to make phone calls
12 free for incarcerated persons who have been convicted or are
13 detained and awaiting a verdict.

14 SECTION 2. Chapter 353, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
15 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
16 and to read as follows:



1 "§353- Free phone calls for committed persons. (a) The
2 department shall provide all committed persons and persons
3 detained and awaiting a verdict with voice communication
4 services, including phone calls, free of charge to the person
5 initiating and the person receiving the communication; provided
6 that no facility with custody of committed persons or persons
7 awaiting a verdict shall offer access to voice communication
8 services less than the services that were offered and available
9 at the facility on January 1, 2024.

10 (b) The department may supplement voice communication
11 services for committed persons and persons detained awaiting a
12 verdict with other communication services, including but not
13 limited to video and electronic communication services; provided
14 that other communication services for committed persons and
15 persons detained awaiting a verdict shall not replace voice
16 communication services and shall be provided free of charge to
17 the person initiating and the person receiving the
18 communication."

19 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Kal Rumba



S.B. NO. 2629

Report Title:

DCR; Incarcerated Persons; Free Phone Calls

Description:

Requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to make phone calls free for incarcerated persons who have been convicted or are detained and awaiting a verdict.

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