



**Tom Gores | Chairman and Chief Executive Officer**

June 4, 2020

Dear Commissioners Clyburn, Copps and Tristani:

Thank you for your May 20 correspondence, and for your continued efforts in support of robust and affordable communications services, particularly in the corrections environment. We are pleased to support those same goals both in concept and in action, as change agents who are transforming Securus Technologies and the industry as a whole.

We agree wholeheartedly that access to reasonably priced telephone service is more important than ever for the country's incarcerated population in the face of restrictions on in-person visitation caused by the coronavirus crisis.

**On March 13, the day COVID-19 was declared a national emergency in the United States, Securus began offering free and discounted services to every one of its state and county corrections agency customers.**

Since then, the company has provided **16.1 million free phone calls** totaling **116.2 million free minutes**; **4.5 million free video connections**; and **6.6 million free email message stamps** to incarcerated individuals (and their families) at more than 731 facilities. In addition to the calls themselves being free, there are no funding or transaction fees associated with them.

The company has also provided additional free calling cards, or "compassion credits," to connect incarcerated individuals who have fallen ill during the pandemic with their loved ones; provided free phone calls between incarcerated individuals and public defenders in certain locations where permitted; and created an inbound email system by providing printers and supplies at 33 locations in California where incarcerated individuals do not have access to individualized email.

Beyond communications connections, Securus also is providing free access to select games and movies on its tablets in facility locations where permitted. So far, more than 500,000 movie rentals and nearly 1 million games have been downloaded or accessed without charge since April.

Further, the company has signed the FCC's [Keep Americans Connected](#) Pledge, Chairman Pai's initiative focused on mitigating the pandemic's impact on telecommunications access.

All of these actions to support individuals impacted by COVID-19 are part of a broader effort to transform the company and make services more accessible and affordable for incarcerated individuals and their loved ones.

In January, CEO Dave Abel announced a number of commitments that include lowering the costs of phone calls and other communications products, increasing transparency, and engaging directly with communities impacted by incarceration.

Those transformation efforts haven't come in a vacuum. They were mandated by Platinum Equity after acquiring the business in 2017. I am happy to report that since then, prices for Securus calling services have fallen by more than 30 percent.

To cite just one example: In Washtenaw County, where your letter cites information claiming that a 10-minute call "would cost about \$11.62," current rates are actually substantially lower. Under the current contract there, the rates are \$0.21 per minute for all calls, or \$2.10 for a 10-minute call – even with a substantial commission retained by the corrections agency under its contract.

Well before the COVID crisis, Inmate Calling Service rates at Securus were steadily declining even in the absence of FCC-imposed caps on intrastate rates, falling on average by about 50% since the FCC issued the 2013 Interstate Inmate Rate Order.

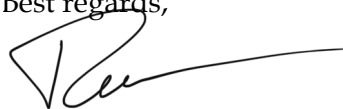
All of Securus' rates for interstate calls are at or below the per-minute rates set by the FCC in the 2013 Interstate Rate Order, and its fees are in compliance with those promulgated in the FCC's 2015 Inmate Rate Order. On an intrastate level, Securus' rates are in compliance with the applicable state PUC / PSC rules and regulations.

Platinum Equity appointed CEO Dave Abel to transform Securus; establish a culture of service focused on the needs of incarcerated consumers and their families and not just on corrections agency customers; reduce telecom pricing; and invest in developing new technologies.


Dave and his team are making significant progress on those objectives. With your permission, I'd like to make them available to meet with you and discuss these reforms directly, to listen to your thoughts, and to consider ideas on what we can do better, faster or both.

Thank you again for your long record for public service on these issues, and for your willingness to work with us on these shared objectives.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Gores', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Gores



Former FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Former FCC Commissioner Michael Copps  
Former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani

Mr. Tom Gores  
Platinum Equity  
360 N. Crescent Dr.  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Mr. Gores:

We write as former commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission who worked hard to ensure that all Americans have access to robust and affordable communications services.

We urge you to act immediately to redress the onerous nature of the inmate calling services system. Platinum Equity and its subsidiary Securus are in a position to lessen the pain of incarcerated people and their families during a time when they are suffering more than ever.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to sweep the globe, its impact on the health and wellbeing of marginalized communities is heartbreaking to watch. Especially vulnerable are our nation's nearly 2.3 million incarcerated citizens who are at high risk of physical harm and infection due to well documented [overcrowding and poor hygiene](#) often exacerbated by failures in the personal products supply chain. With prison facilities indefinitely [suspending](#) family and other personal visits until the COVID-19 pandemic is contained, the mental wellbeing of incarcerated people is now more at risk than ever. A simple solution would be to make it affordable for people in prisons and jails to keep in touch with their loved ones and legal counsel by telephone or video visitation.

While the Phone Justice movement has been long advocating for rate reform, the cruel ramifications of COVID-19 are a stark reminder of how onerous the inmate calling system is and why rate relief is needed now. Rates from prisons can run over [\\$1 a minute](#) and on average, an in-state phone call from a jail costs [three times](#) as much as one from prison. The national average for a 15-minute call from jail is \$5.61 and thanks to a helpful tool from the [Prison Policy Institute](#), we know that a 10 minute call from Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department in Michigan would cost about \$11.62, which is \$2.17 over Michigan's minimum wage of \$9.45. That means that a Michigander who makes minimum wage would have to trade over one full hour of work for a fleeting ten minute conversation with their loved one.

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These exorbitant costs for a simple phone call may be an annoyance to a professional basketball player, but they represent extreme barriers for just about everyone else connected to someone on the inside. Most people who enter the criminal justice system are overwhelmingly poor: [Two thirds of](#) those detained in jails reported annual incomes of under \$12,000 prior to their arrest; and as more people lose their jobs due to the pandemic, their ability to maintain a connection lessens with each passing day. This April, over 20 million Americans [filed for unemployment insurance](#) leaving more families facing the unthinkable choice between putting food on their table or having regular contact with their loved ones. While some progress has been made over the last decade, the ability of incarcerated people to communicate with their families remains out of reach for too many.

To remedy this, we urge you to provide free telephone and video calls to people in facilities that are under contract with Securus for a minimum of 60 days and waive all added fees associated with these calls. These are times of extreme financial strain and unprecedented social isolation and it is within your power to help these families keep in touch.

It is important to note that Washtenaw County uses Securus for its telecommunications needs and here's another interesting fact: The facility is a mere 40 miles from Little Caesar Arena. Some of your players have ties to vulnerable communities and we're willing to wager more than one Piston has had to assist a friend or family member straddled with the burden of these egregious rates.

As COVID-19 spreads through America's prisons and jails, families worry about and deserve to hear directly from their loved ones on how they are being treated for and protected from the virus. Some prisons are attempting to slow the spread by forcing everyone into [solitary confinement](#), a terribly painful solution known to cause depression, anxiety, disorientation and more.

Nearly [half of the people](#) in the United States are reporting that COVID-19 is impacting their mental state of being. Every credible expert recommends that we "stay connected to one another" and "communicate our fears and worries to another caring person" in order to cope but for the incarcerated that is a luxury too few can afford. You are in a

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position to directly help millions of people whose already fragile lives are being further fractured by the effects of the pandemic by granting relief now.

We implore you to take a meaningful act of compassion over the next 60 days and shift the psychological trajectory of millions of our nation's most vulnerable. As we approach the season that pays tribute to Fathers, you can have a positive impact on the ability of 2.7 million children to make phone calls and visit by video with their incarcerated fathers and grandfathers.

Sincerely,

  
Mignon L. Clyburn (May 15, 2020)

Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

  
Michael J. Copps (May 15, 2020)

Commissioner Michael Copps

  
Gloria Tristani (May 15, 2020)

Commissioner Gloria Tristani