

From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM

To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>

Subject: Testimony Regarding NDOC & GTL/ViaPath Tablet/Phone Services – Rosemary Vandecar

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Disclaimer: Submitted by **Return Strong** on behalf of an incarcerated individual with their authorization (name appears in the subject line); content reflects their experiences and should be recorded under their name.

We wish to express ongoing concern and dissatisfaction with **deceptive practices and misrepresentations** by NDOC and GTL/ViaPath regarding tablet and phone services:

1. **Contract transparency:** Based on reasonable information, GTL/ViaPath was under investigation at the time the contract with NDOC was accepted. In July, as soon as tablets were issued, I requested via kite to review the contract and rate structure; I have yet to receive a response.
2. **Attorney-client communication issues:** There is documentation that inmate attorney-client calls were not labeled as confidential or “not recorded,” as confirmed in the 2/5/25 memo issued by AWP Dreesen, continuing through calls in August and September. The Federal Public Defender’s office has also noted oversight in this regard.
3. **Inmate responsibility for reporting defects:** A 7/10/25 memo from AWO Nash placed the responsibility on inmates to report tablet/phone defects to GTL/ViaPath.
 - o Inmates did not negotiate the contract.
 - o It is impractical to expect inmates with inoperable equipment to communicate effectively through the app as directed.
4. **Excessive equipment costs:** A 9/24/25 memo from the canteen noted that inmates must purchase headphones with microphones for \$53.35 and replacement chargers for \$7.99. Yellow earbuds, previously listed at \$3.99, were pulled as “not officially approved.” State-issued equipment now requires inmates to pay elevated prices for replacements.
5. **Contract participation and rate increases:** NDOC allegedly participated in this contract alongside at least nine other states, raising concerns regarding revenue streams and inducements. Recent last-minute phone rate increases, followed by increased tablet media/game costs, suggest that the initial rates were misleading. Families and inmates were effectively **sucker-punched** without notice — only 72 hours over a weekend, rather than the standard 30-day policy/service change notification. This is documented in the 10/10/25 “Telephone Call Rates” issued by Director Dzurenda, effective 10/13/25.

This pattern of practice is long-standing under the current administration. Supporting documentation, including articles, kites, and affidavits, can be made available as needed.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of **FMWCC inmates J. Solander, M. Balandova, S. Moore, A. DeWolfe, T. Willis, R. Williams, A. Rohr, H. Bustami, D. Aguiano**, and others who wish to remain anonymous at this time. All convey the financial and emotional difficulty in affording these “services.”

Respectfully,

Rosemary Vandecar #1092080

FMWCC

From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>
Subject: For Public Comment- Erin Kuhn Brown, FMWCC

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I personally spoke face to face with the Via Path Rep. here @ FMWCC. The Rep said that he could not hand out any more chargers & head phones @ FMWCC, because then he would have to do it @ the men's prisons. I asked him why we were given BROKEN equipment, and a lot of individuals do not have FUNDS to purchase. He said that in order to stay on schedule for the men to receive their tablets FMWCC needed to be issued. I responded "even if they were broken". He said nothing. Curious why a item # was able to be approved by NDOC COMMISSARY for the \$ 53.00+ head phone's, and not for the \$ 3.30 ear buds.

It is all about profiteering.

Curious what kickback is given to NDOC Commissary???????

Every one needs money, and so do our FAMILIES.

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Respectfully,
Denise Bolanos Heredia

From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM

To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>

Subject: For Public Comment- Brandy, FMWCC

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This is in reference to the tablets they've replaced our communications avenues with. They've had issues since we got them and the chargers and earbuds don't work. They only allowed us to exchange the chargers and earbuds for free in the very beginning of having the tablets, but around mid August they stopped issuing them. They said we would have to purchase them from canteen. The chargers are being sold for \$7.99 and they're the exact same ones that were given to us that never worked to begin with. They also haven't made the earbuds available to buy yet, but they're the same ones that were given to us that also don't work. I'm not sure what the price is on them yet. All they are offering are headphones that cost almost \$54, which is way too expensive. Also, within the last two weeks they've increased the prices on all the games, movies and music to 5 cents a minute. There were 2 sections before, standard for 3 cents a min. and premium for 5 cents a min., now it's all the same. They also increased the phone call rates to 10 cents a min. from 6 cents a min. which almost doubles our phone call cost. The prices are sky high and it's hard on our families who are trying to support us. If there's anything that can be done to make things more affordable as well as having quality chargers and earbuds/ headphones that would be great. Thank you for all of your help.

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From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM

To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>

Subject: For Public Comment-April Parks, FMWCC

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I am requesting that Return Strong email the legislative commission on my behalf. My name is April Parks and I am an inmate at Florence McClure. The issues we are having at the facility center on the quality of the equipment and service. From almost day one we have struggled with the tablet chargers and earbuds not working or working intermittently. Requiring us to purchase chargers and ear buds with a relatively new tablet is unheard of. We cannot use the tablets without these accessories and in any other scenario the accessories would be covered by a warranty. Providing us with subpar accessories and then turning around and requiring us to almost immediately purchase new accessories smacks of a scam with the only purpose being to enrich either NDOC or Viapath. Furthermore NDOC stands in the breach of allowing us to connect and have continuing communication with those who care for and love us. In order for inmates to be able to so, we must have working equipment that is not overly burdensome to access due to charging and hearing issues. It seems that in so many instances NDOC is reinventing the wheel, when simply using common sense and standard practices adopted by many prisons and institutions should be the working model. It is my hope that this issue will be resolved quickly as NDOC can do better. Additionally, raising our telephone rates is not conducive to keeping us connected to our support systems, offer a flat rate for talk and text and other tablet apps.

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From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>
Subject: For Public Comment- Briana Matus, FMWCC

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We once had two paid profiles: a standard 3¢ a minute and a premium 5¢ a minute. Starting October 15th, we are now being charged 5¢ a minute for the standard and now 18¢ a minute for the premium profile, now renamed "Standard 2".

The radio app, which was once free, was moved to the Standard 2 profile, 18¢ a minute... The reason provided by the AWO at FMWCC said it was due to low sales of radios being sold from our special order at canteen.

A memo posted October 10th generated and signed by NDOC Director Dzurunda said starting Oct 13th we will be charged 10¢ a minute for our 15 minute incriminate phone calls... Due to the FCC revoking a law (which is a lie). But this adds up to \$1.50 a call. We are being overcharged 14¢ a minute paying a minimum of \$2.08 and a maximum of \$5.08 FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES. Video chats are \$5 for a thirty minute session. Our text messages are 20¢ for both senders. This adds up.

Our response for new earbuds and chargers were answered with paying more money. A ViaPath Charger via fmwcc special order is \$7.99. Faulty, over the ear KOSS headphones are \$52.89... And we were advised from ViaPath that we are not supposed to use these on our tablets, as they cause damage to them...

The educational programs aren't at the very least recognized by the Parole Board. So our time, and effort is discredited.

I'm unable to call the majority of my family and loved ones. My family and loved ones are losing hundreds of dollars investing into these tablets, phone calls and video chats. Just for the prices to continue rising. The one free daily call we get is 120 seconds. Yes, three full minutes. Three minutes to say "I love you. I miss you. THANK YOU FOR USING GTL GOODBYE"

The majority of us that are constantly proving our dignity, morale, integrity and thirst for freedom are in a constant battle of being knocked down from this system. We're denied programming due to sentence structure, or availability. You give us programs that aren't recognized. As someone with life as a back number, I work full time, have no write ups, and volunteer tirelessly for my institution, we don't make enough to buy hygiene necessities, let alone an opportunity to afford a phone call or a video visit with my loved ones... This is unfair.

We're drowning financially. Our loved ones are struggling to keep us afloat. CHARGE US FAIRLY. GIVE US A CHANCE. HELP US REFORM. SEE US. HEAR US. WE ARE HUMAN TOO. These gates open, and one day we will be a part of the community. A lot of us want to be great neighbors, but that starts with your help. Stop giving us rocks and expecting us to make diamonds.

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From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>
Subject: For Public Comment From: Donald McCallister- ESP

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Offenders were told that Viapath was for offenders, but it looks like they are just out for themselves and NDOC. With the latest increase of phone calls and the increase in games, movies, and music, we are not going to be able to utilize the device like we have in the past few months.

As for education classes here in Ely State Prison, there are NO classes available for credit! This is not fair that we spend time helping ourselves rehab but with no support or knowledge from NDOC. This is not a fair system — it is so expensive for our families, especially when we call and cannot get through because our calls get lost in SPAM folders.

Also, as an offender advisory committee member, we were never advised of any of these changes or that changes were coming.

Thank you.

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From: Denise Bolaños <deniseb@returnstrongnv.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM
To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>
Subject: For public comment- Suzanne Carno, FMWCC

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Viapath and NDOC are abusing their position and the belief the inmate pop. is alone and has no real recourse. They bank on it, in more ways than 1. We were issued a table, chgr earbuds/mic 2 YRS later than orig sched. The bulk of what was issued was DEFECTIVE. When replacements were needed, staff (Viapath and NDOC) said buy one, "you all complain too much". Imagine that! Requesting items that Work! At the very least, if any of these items lasted at least 30 days it would be reasonable, but THIS is not the case. I do not have \$60 for a headset, especially since I am also now REQUIRED to give up my TV/radio headphones (that cost \$80) in order to even buy this NEW appliance. Oddly I am NOT req to relinquish my MP3 chgr to buy a tablet chgr. This is typical, but wrong. AR 711 allows 1 of every appliance to be purchased, yet if I wish to use the tablet I must submit to their whim. It cost me \$ I don't have to waste. I am CERTAIN we were not to be issued items in disrepair. Yet here we are. The phone costs have gone up again. Chgs even occurring AFTER the call has disconnected. My calls are blocked from some of my children because it comes up as spam. SPAM! So often my kids cannot hear me. The phone call quality is as poor as this scheme to extort money from this population and our families. Who is getng \$ kickbacks?!? There are no OPs for the tablets, AWP stated its been 2yrs, its a process. Pls help. S. Carno #80747

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Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM

To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>

Subject: For Public Comment- Mark, ESP

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People's overall opinion of these tablets are not too good. To switch between apps you have to logout then back in. The facial rec will work with anybody's face. I have talked with 10 people. All think the games should be free (like the score). Prices for the movies are OK. The pay services charge you while you are looking. That's wrong!. Classes are good and informative but do they help with days ? Nobody knows. Video visits are a hit & miss. Lots of dropped calls & freezing up. Overall very underwhelming.

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Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 3:00 PM

To: Legislative Commission <LC@lcb.state.nv.us>

Subject: For Public Comment- Shauna Dodd, FMWCC

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I'm asking for this to be sent on my behalf, by return strong. Thank you.

The tablets from Viapath can be a blessing to inmates. Why? Well, they can help reestablish family connection and help inmates be more involved in their families and children's lives by the video visits alone. The tablets also offer a variety of classes that can be utilized. In the beginning there were three sections... One for free: this has your phone app, video app, education app and a miscellaneous app that has a dictionary, notices from the facility and some other apps. It also had the radio app, but that was quickly moved to the \$.5 section. The radio is therapeutic and calming for many people, but now most cannot afford it. The second app was \$.3 a minute. This app has games and a basic movie app that never gets updated with any new movies. The third app is \$.5 a minute. This also has games, a meditation app, music apps, the radio I previously mentioned, movies(this movie app gets updated with new movies every few months) and some other miscellaneous apps. Now not everyone can afford the last two apps. So this means no radio, not even a movie to take your mind off the day or to give yourself a mental break. Now the last two apps are both \$.5 a minute. Stating viapath is honoring the contract between them and NDOC. We've also had a problem with charges not working and headphones breaking quickly and no way to replace them until now. Now we are expected to pay for new chargers and headphones.

NDOC is suppose to be about family reunification. More so for the family not even so much for us as inmates even though this helps us with our mental health and rehabilitation as well. Not being able to afford basics is hard enough on our families, now we have more expense with having to purchase a charger because the one you were given doesn't work or headphones because in order to do a video visit or make a call from your tablet you need them for it to work. If you've had a day or need to tune out the prison surroundings, not everyone can afford to buy a radio from canteen store and now still can't listen to one because its \$.5 a minute. And now phone calls.... 15 minute calls went from \$.6 minute to.. Well they say \$.10 a minute but its actually more. A 15 minute call should be \$1.50 its not, it \$2.08. Why is that? So here we are charge after charge after charge. This is an extra cost on our already struggling families.

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