



October 28, 2025

To the Members of the Nevada Legislative Commission,

On behalf of *Return Strong*, Nevada's grassroots organization representing incarcerated people in Nevada and their families, I am writing to urgently appeal for your intervention in the ongoing and deeply harmful failures surrounding the Viapath contract and its implementation across the Nevada Department of Corrections.

Since the transition to Viapath's phone and tablet system, the ability for incarcerated people to communicate with their loved ones has been severely compromised—leaving families isolated, financially burdened, and emotionally devastated. The Legislature approved these tablets in good faith as a step toward greater connection, education, and rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the reality on the ground has been the opposite: families are facing unprecedented barriers to basic communication.

1. Phone Service Failures: AT&T Customers Cannot Receive Calls

Upon the Viapath “cutover,” AT&T customers were immediately unable to receive calls from High Desert State Prison (HDSP) and Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center (FMWCC). Despite months of outreach to both NDOC and Viapath, the issue remains unresolved.

Families have been forced to:

- Purchase “burner” phones with alternative carriers just to receive calls, paying multiple phone bills each month.
- Break existing phone contracts and pay cancellation fees.
- Resort to unsafe three-way call patches—risking disciplinary action for incarcerated callers.

NDOC blames Viapath, Viapath blames AT&T, and AT&T is silent. In the meantime, families remain disconnected. Based on our research, the likely cause is that Viapath selected outgoing numbers from a recycled pool of former robocall lines—numbers now blocked by AT&T due to their involvement in a major spam-related lawsuit. This could be easily remedied if NDOC and

Viapath worked with AT&T to reassign or unblock these numbers, but they have refused to take responsibility. We are pleading for your oversight to compel corrective action.

2. Hidden Costs and Defective Equipment

Families and incarcerated individuals were told that tablets and accessories would be reliable and only require payment for intentional damage. Instead, chargers and headphones routinely fail within days. When we raised this issue directly with Viapath's transition manager, we were told they were designed to break easily "for safety reasons." This design choice has led to extortionate costs—\$54 for replacement headphones and \$8 for chargers—that people must repeatedly repurchase.

To make matters worse, people housed far from modems experience constant **dropped calls and weak tablet connections**, forcing them to stand by windows or in specific corners just to stay connected. It's exhausting, frustrating, and entirely avoidable.

3. Predatory Charging Practices

Charges accrue as soon as a user logs into the tablet—not when they begin using a feature. Simply browsing a movie selection starts billing, even if nothing is viewed. This deceptive billing structure inflates costs and preys on the poorest people in our state.

Please see the letter coming from Nick Shepack from FFJC for additional information on pricing issues and concerns. We are in alignment on this!

4. Missing Grievance, Medical, and Reporting Features

NDOC promised that tablets would allow people to file medical requests, grievances, PREA reports, and time-calculation inquiries—critical tools to reduce litigation, streamline internal processes, and ensure due process. None of these features exist. There is no communication from NDOC or Viapath about if or when they will be functional.

5. Lack of Credit-Bearing Education Programs

Although touted as a rehabilitative tool, Viapath's educational and self-improvement programs do not count toward parole or sentence reduction. People complete courses in good faith, yet receive no recognition or credit. This undermines both rehabilitation and public safety goals.

6. Free Daily Call Misrepresentation

The Legislature was told that each person would receive one free daily 15-minute call. In practice, this "free" call lasts just three minutes—barely enough time to say, "I love you" before being cut off.

As one woman at FMWCC shared:

"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 a 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 apart 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."

-Briana- a woman incarcerated at FMWCC

Our Requests:

We are asking the Legislative Commission to exercise oversight authority and demand accountability from NDOC and Viapath. Specifically, we ask that you:

1. **Investigate** the systemic phone failures affecting AT&T customers and compel Viapath and NDOC to coordinate with AT&T to resolve the issue immediately.
2. **Audit** the true cost structure and consumer impact of Viapath's billing, replacement parts, and "free call" policy.
3. **Ensure delivery** of all promised tablet features—medical requests, grievances, and reporting forms.
4. **Review compliance** with the contract terms approved by the Legislature and evaluate whether the current system aligns with the spirit and intent of that approval.

This situation is untenable. Families should not have to buy extra phones, break contracts, or go months without contact with their loved ones. Connection is not a luxury—it is a cornerstone of rehabilitation and public safety.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and respectfully request a public hearing or formal investigation to address these harms. The people living inside Nevada's prisons, and their families outside, deserve better than silence and finger-pointing.

Thank you for your continued service and for standing up for the dignity and rights of all Nevadans. We have reached out to all of you to request constituent meetings on this and other issues impacting your constituents and their loved ones. We understand the world is a chaotic place right now and appreciate the demands on your time, but unfortunately, we also need your help and expertise.

Thank You,

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