

Rehabilitation provides both voice and electronic messaging services completely free of charge to both sender and receiver. This bill further changes an outdated regulation requiring facilities to disconnect tablet or voice communications based solely on the duration of the call, ending the practice of cutting off conversations every 15 minutes.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law (Penal Code Section 2084.5, enacted by SB 1008 (Becker), Chapter 827, Statutes of 2022) requires CDCR to provide persons in its custody with accessible, functional voice communication services free of charge to both the person initiating and the person receiving the communication, while preserving CDCR's operational discretion to ensure those services do not interfere with necessary programming. The statute separately bars any state agency from receiving revenue from the provision of voice or other communication services to incarcerated persons. This bill extends that free-of-charge mandate to electronic messaging and prohibits staff from disconnecting a communication based solely on its duration.

CDCR delivers these services through a single tablet-and-communications contract valued at approximately \$189 million over its term, which runs from roughly February 2025 to February 2031. Tablets are provided at no cost to incarcerated persons following reception, classification, and transfer to a designated institution, and give access to telephone calls, electronic messaging, and video calls; wall phones remain available as well. Incarcerated persons generally have tablet access throughout the day and may place multiple calls, subject to a 15-minute per-call limit, during free time. Under the current contract, the services are priced and provided as follows. Telephone calls are already furnished free of charge to the population, at a contract rate of roughly \$0.016 per minute. Video calls include 30 free minutes per month, at \$0.10 per minute thereafter. Electronic messaging includes 20 free messages per month, at \$0.03 per message thereafter. Because the existing contract is priced on a per-message and per-minute basis, delivering messaging free of charge would, as CDCR notes, likely require renegotiating the contract. The fiscal consequences of that renegotiation, and of the usage increase that typically follows a drop to zero price, are addressed in the Fiscal Effect above.

Analysis Prepared by: Shiran Zohar / APPR. / (916) 319-2081