

**Director David Fathi,
National Prisons Project,
American Civil Liberties Union,
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor,
New York NY 10004**



Dear Director Fathi,

I am writing on behalf of the Organization for World Peace to draw your attention to the egregious injustices inmates face due to Knox County jail's digital visitation policy. I urge you, as the director of the American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project, to provide financial and legal aid to ongoing lawsuits challenging the legality of the jail's visitation policy.

The program is a classic example of the government outsourcing functions to private corporations at the expense of prisoners. Instead of allowing face-to-face visitation with family members and loved ones, prisoners are instead forced to rent tablets with which they can call family members. These rentals then generate revenue for the company contracted to run and implement the visitation program, Securus Technologies. Securus is widely known for dubious business practices like recording calls between inmates and attorneys, which are legally protected from being monitored. In-person visits are essential to the emotional health of inmates. The trauma inmates endure when denied the opportunity to see their loved ones is just the first tragedy of the program. Studies have shown that in-person visitation reduces recidivism, and behavior while in the jails themselves.

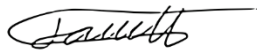
The program magnifies the already evident effects of economic inequality on inmates, those in jail are those who couldn't afford bail, which means many are from low-income families. In turn, many of them can't afford the rental price required for digital visitation, meaning they are unable to see their families in any form. The lack of any visitation exacerbates the negative psychological and emotional effects of denying prisoners in-person visits.

A number of inmates from Knox County Jail have filed a class-action lawsuit (*Amble v. Knox Count*) against the program, claiming correctly that it violates their First, Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth amendment rights. Given the financially precarious situations many of these inmates face, a sustained legal battle will likely not end in their favor, which is why the support of a nationally renowned organization like the ACLU could be critical. Successful litigation here could set a precedent that stops the nation-wide creep

towards digital visitation. Inmates deserve a right to in-person visitation, with digital visitation as a supplemental option provided for free.

Given the ACLU's impressive history litigating abuses of inmates' rights, I am confident you will investigate the issue further and protect the rights of thousands of vulnerable people.

Yours sincerely,
Christopher Eckert
Advocate, The Organization for World Peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathon Arrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jonathon Arrell
Vice President, The Organization for World Peace