



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Committee on
Communications

3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC
20017

202.541.3000
usccb.org

July 10, 2025

The Honorable Brendan Carr
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Carr:

I write in response to your June 30, 2025, decision to stop for two years the implementation of the bipartisan *Martha Wright-Reed Just and Reasonable Communications Act*. This law, supported by the USCCB and passed unanimously by Congress, aims to ensure that people in prisons and detention centers—and their families—are not burdened by excessive phone and video call fees.

The Catholic Church teaches that every person possesses inherent dignity, regardless of their circumstances. Incarcerated individuals do not lose their humanity or their right to be treated with justice and compassion. As Hebrews 13:3 implores us, “Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body.” For this reason, the USCCB has long supported affordable communications access for incarcerated people and advocated for broader restorative justice reforms. As you have acknowledged, the evidence is clear: maintaining family connections improves outcomes for incarcerated individuals, reduces recidivism, and strengthens communities.

For too long, families have been forced to choose between paying to stay in touch with an incarcerated loved one or meeting other basic needs such as rent, food, or medication. The current rates are exploitative, extracting profit from the most vulnerable and from those who are simply trying to hold their families together through incredibly difficult circumstances. Stopping implementation of this law, when many of the rules have been in place since January, only prolongs that injustice.

I respectfully urge you to implement the rate reductions and consumer protections authorized by the *Martha Wright-Reed Act* without further delay. Families, many of whom already face significant financial strain, are counting on this bipartisan legislation to make staying connected with their loved ones more just and accessible. The law is not only a matter of policy but of human dignity and family integrity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William D. Byrne".

Most Reverend William D. Byrne
Bishop of Springfield
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Communications