



# Press Statement

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## **MMTC Congratulates FCC on Votes to Adopt Rate Caps on Inmate Calling Services and to Relax the Foreign Broadcast Ownership Review Process**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 22, 2015):** Today, the Federal Communications Commission voted to adopt rate caps for all local and long distance calls from correctional facilities, eliminate and cap an endless array of fees, and ensure that every call made from prison or a jail is delivered with reasonable, just, and fair rates to the benefit of the incarcerated and their family and friends. The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) applauds the Commission for its vote today to ease and address the persistent “tax on pain” affecting millions of individuals seeking an affordable and consistent gateway to communications from prisons. The rate caps are a significant action in the nation’s fight against cruel and unusual punishment.

“Today, the Commission addressed one of the most important social justice issues of our time,” stated MMTC President and CEO Kim Keenan. “A ceiling on inmate calling rates will allow families, especially children, to maintain contact with their imprisoned relatives, while reducing recidivism and empowering re-entry into society. Finally, it marks an end to stripping these families of wealth that could be used for education, training, and closing the digital divide.”

MMTC also praises Commissioner Mignon Clyburn’s recognition that the site commissions paid to prison facilities are still an issue that requires major reform. Without some jurisdiction over these often-predatory fees, prison phone calls still risk predatory loopholes that can negatively impact the cost to consumers.

The Commission also voted today to streamline its broadcast foreign ownership review process and standardize the review process for broadcast, common carrier, and aeronautical licensees and applicants. Over the past 10 years, MMTC, along with over 50 national civil rights, intergovernmental, entrepreneurial and professional groups, petitioned the Commission to relax its foreign ownership policies, which discouraged the access to overseas capital much-needed by minority broadcasters. The relaxation of these policies in 2013, together with today’s plan to further streamline the review process, represent firm steps toward granting diverse entrepreneurs an equitable stake in broadcast ownership. Thanks to the Commission’s decision today, minority-owned broadcast stations will have greater opportunities for access to capital to start, maintain, and grow their operations.

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### **About MMTC:**

The Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecommunications and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation’s leading advocate for minority advancement in communications.