

ACLU of Wisconsin: Asks Oneida County Jail to change it's ban on mail to incarcerated people, requests contracts between jail and costly electronic communication vendors

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 20, 2021

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MILWAUKEE — The ACLU of Wisconsin today called Oneida County Jail's ban of mailed personal correspondence to incarcerated people a violation of their First Amendment rights and asked that the jail change its harmful policy.

"Staying connected with loved ones while in custody is crucial to incarcerated people's health and well-being and their families. By restricting access to mail while commodifying digital means of communication, the Oneida County Jail is making it much harder for individuals in its facility to maintain relationships with people on the outside, forcing incarcerated people into further isolation," said Larry Dupuis, legal director of the ACLU of Wisconsin. "Mail should be fully accessible to people at Oneida County Jail, and their ability to stay in touch with others should never depend on how much money they have."

The ACLU also filed an open records request with the jail for any contracts and agreements the jail has with vendors who provide email and text communication to incarcerated people from family members at a cost.

"While the jail appears to allow personal communication by email and text, for a price, these alternatives are not reasonable substitutes for paper mail for many correspondents," the letter stated. "Some family members and friends, particularly older people and people with lower incomes, may not have access to the

technology for sending and receiving emails and texts.”

“We’ve heard from community partners on the ground about similar issues occurring at other facilities throughout Wisconsin, including Fox Lake Correctional and Stanley Correction institutions, and we are closely monitoring the situation at those facilities as well,” said Tomás Clasen, advocacy director of the ACLU of Wisconsin.