

Prison Profiteering Quiz

1. What is the commissary in a prison?
 - a. A place where you can see a notary public
 - b. A gathering place to watch TV
 - c. A store selling food, clothing, toiletries, etc.
2. How much was spent on store purchases, telephone calls, video calls and media in prisons in 2021?
 - a. \$20 million
 - b. \$35 million
 - c. \$50 million
3. What are incarcerated people and their families charged for sending emails?
 - a. Emails are free in Virginia prisons.
 - b. One email costs 15 cents, or 10 cents each in bulk.
 - c. One email costs 39 cents, or 25 cents each in bulk.
4. How many families with an incarcerated loved one go into debt paying to communicate with them?
 - a. About 30 percent
 - b. About 50 percent
 - c. It's rare for families go into debt to communicate.
5. Virginia prisons house about 30,000 individuals; how many phone calls have they made so far in 2022?
 - a. 3,024,750
 - b. 10,976,120
 - c. 19,696,549
6. A 30-minute call in a Virginia prison costs \$1.23. The same call in Illinois costs:
 - a. About half as much (62 cents)
 - b. About one quarter as much (27 cents)
 - c. Double the cost (\$2.46)
7. Which states provide free calling in their prisons?
 - a. Connecticut
 - b. California
 - c. Iowa
 - d. All of the above
8. What is the top pay rate for an incarcerated worker whose skills are classified in the "unskilled" category?
 - a. 27 cents per hour
 - b. 35 cents per hour
 - c. 99 cents per hour
9. What is the maximum number of hours that incarcerated people are allowed to work?
 - a. 40 hours per week
 - b. 40 hours plus overtime hours
 - c. 30 hours per week
10. How much does the Virginia Department of Corrections spend to feed each incarcerated person 3 meals a day?
 - a. \$2.20 per day
 - b. \$5.10 per day
 - c. \$9.95 per day

Prison Profiteering Quiz

1. What is the commissary in a prison?
 - a. A place where you can see a notary public
 - b. A gathering place to watch TV
 - c. A store selling food, clothing, toiletries, etc.
2. How much was spent on store purchases, telephone calls, video calls and media in prisons in 2021?
 - a. \$20 million
 - b. \$35 million
 - c. \$50 million
3. What are incarcerated people and their families charged for sending emails?
 - a. Emails are free in Virginia prisons.
 - b. One email costs 15 cents, or 10 cents each in bulk.
 - c. One email costs 39 cents, or 25 cents each in bulk.
4. How many families with an incarcerated loved one go into debt paying to communicate with them?
 - a. About 30 percent
 - b. About 50 percent
 - c. It's rare for families go into debt to communicate.
5. Virginia prisons house about 30,000 individuals; how many phone calls have they made so far in 2022?
 - a. 3,024,750
 - b. 10,976,120
 - c. 19,696,549
6. A 30-minute call in a Virginia prison costs \$1.23. The same call in Illinois costs:
 - a. About half as much (62 cents)
 - b. About one quarter as much (27 cents)
 - c. Double the cost (\$2.46)
7. Which states provide free calling in their prisons?
 - a. Connecticut
 - b. California
 - c. Iowa
 - d. All of the above
8. What is the top pay rate for an incarcerated worker whose skills are classified in the "unskilled" category?
 - a. 27 cents per hour
 - b. 35 cents per hour
 - c. 99 cents per hour
9. What is the maximum number of hours that incarcerated people are allowed to work?
 - a. 40 hours per week
 - b. 40 hours plus overtime hours
 - c. 30 hours per week
10. How much does the Virginia Department of Corrections spend to feed each incarcerated person 3 meals a day?
 - a. \$2.20 per day
 - b. \$5.10 per day
 - c. \$9.95 per day

1. **C.** A commissary is a store in a prison where incarcerated persons may purchase from an approved list of items that can include hygiene items, food, beverages, health items, clothing, writing instruments, etc. Availability and quality of the items vary greatly depending on the vendor. Access is limited to those who have a job or support from family. Incarcerated people without either are forced to turn to informal means of generating income or go without essential items. Virginia Department of Corrections earns 9% commission on commissary purchases, resulting in an average \$3.9 million annual revenue from individuals earning a maximum of \$72 a month.
2. **C.** \$50 million was spent by incarcerated individuals on store purchases, telephone calls, video calls and media in 2021. Most purchases include fees and/or commissions on top of already high prices.
3. **C.** Incarcerated people and their families pay 39 cents for virtual “stamps” to send or receive emails. Twenty-five cents, if purchased in bulk. Department of Corrections collects a commission of 5 cents per outbound email according to their contract with J-Pay, the vendor providing telecom services, among others. Most of J-Pay’s services are priced per minute at similarly high rates.
4. **A.** One in three families with an incarcerated family member one go into debt paying to communicate with their loved one.
5. **C.** Virginia prisons house about 30,000 individuals, who have made 19,696,549 phone calls so far in 2022. Maintaining contact with family and community is demonstrated to improve outcomes for incarcerated people, representing an important element of informal rehabilitation.
6. **B.** A 30-minute call in a Virginia prison costs four times more than the same call in Illinois facilities – calling into question the basis for determining Virginia prison phone rates, and the relationship of actual cost to charges to incarcerated callers. J-Pay is the telecom provider in both states.
7. **D.** Connecticut and California both provide free calls to incarcerated people. Iowa is completing a 12-month trial of no-cost calls.
8. **A.** A worker whose skills are classified as “unskilled” earns 27 cents per hour (\$43/month). Workers in the “skilled” category earn 45 cents per hour (\$72/month). In the semi-skilled category, the maximum monthly is \$56. In the commissary, a Fruit of the Loom t-shirt costs \$6.46, and an 11 oz. bag of pretzels is \$2.06.
9. **C.** The maximum number of hours that incarcerated people are allowed to work is 30 per week. An individual’s total budget is limited by their skills classification, extremely low pay rates, and the shortened work-week.
10. **A.** The Virginia Department of Corrections spends only \$2.20/day to feed adult men and women, some of whom work in roles requiring physical exertion. The budget obviously limits the quality of food and opportunity for healthful nutrition.



If you are concerned about profiteering in Virginia prisons, please consider signing our petition to stop it. Use the QR code to sign on. Thank you! --Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy



1. **C.** A commissary is a store in a prison where incarcerated persons may purchase from an approved list of items that can include hygiene items, food, beverages, health items, clothing, writing instruments, etc. Availability and quality of the items vary greatly depending on the vendor. Access is limited to those who have a job or support from family. Incarcerated people without either are forced to turn to informal means of generating income or go without essential items. Virginia Department of Corrections earns 9% commission on commissary purchases, resulting in an average \$3.9 million annual revenue from individuals earning a maximum of \$72 a month.
2. **C.** \$50 million was spent by incarcerated individuals on store purchases, telephone calls, video calls and media in 2021. Most purchases include fees and/or commissions on top of already high prices.
3. **C.** Incarcerated people and their families pay 39 cents for virtual “stamps” to send or receive emails. Twenty-five cents, if purchased in bulk. Department of Corrections collects a commission of 5 cents per outbound email according to their contract with J-Pay, the vendor providing telecom services, among others. Most of J-Pay’s services are priced per minute at similarly high rates.
4. **A.** One in three families with an incarcerated family member one go into debt paying to communicate with their loved one.
5. **C.** Virginia prisons house about 30,000 individuals, who have made 19,696,549 phone calls so far in 2022. Maintaining contact with family and community is demonstrated to improve outcomes for incarcerated people, representing an important element of informal rehabilitation.
6. **B.** A 30-minute call in a Virginia prison costs four times more than the same call in Illinois facilities – calling into question the basis for determining Virginia prison phone rates, and the relationship of actual cost to charges to incarcerated callers. J-Pay is the telecom provider in both states.
7. **D.** Connecticut and California both provide free calls to incarcerated people. Iowa is completing a 12-month trial of no-cost calls.
8. **A.** A worker whose skills are classified as “unskilled” earns 27 cents per hour (\$43/month). Workers in the “skilled” category earn 45 cents per hour (\$72/month). In the semi-skilled category, the maximum monthly is \$56. In the commissary, a Fruit of the Loom t-shirt costs \$6.46, and an 11 oz. bag of pretzels is \$2.06.
9. **C.** The maximum number of hours that incarcerated people are allowed to work is 30 per week. An individual’s total budget is limited by their skills classification, extremely low pay rates, and the shortened work-week.
10. **A.** The Virginia Department of Corrections spends only \$2.20/day to feed adult men and women, some of whom work in roles requiring physical exertion. The budget obviously limits the quality of food and opportunity for healthful nutrition.



If you are concerned about profiteering in Virginia prisons, please consider signing our petition to stop it. Use the QR code to sign on. Thank you! --Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

