

# Pashman Stein Walder Hayden Secures Recovery for Class of Thousands in Lawsuit Regarding Overcharging New Jersey Inmates' Calling Fees

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News

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Pashman Stein Walder Hayden partners **James A. Plaisted** and **Justin P. Walder**, along with co-counsel James Cecchi and Lindsey Taylor of Carella Byrne, are pleased to announce a resolution in favor of a statewide class of inmates' family members in an action against Global Tel Link Corp. (GTL), a prison technology company, and its subsidiaries in a case regarding overcharged inmate calling services. Pashman Stein attorneys **Dennis Smith** and **Matthew Frisch** were also part of the legal team representing the class.

On May 28, 2020, Global Tel Link Corp. agreed to a deal worth up to \$25 million in cash and phone credits. The settlement is pending preliminary approval in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. Under the deal, Global Tel Link Corp. will reimburse its current customers in account credits and payout former customers in cash, capping the individual payout at \$5,000.

In August 2018, U.S. District Judge William J. Martini **certified the class** of thousands of individuals, comprised of individuals who were incarcerated in a New Jersey prison or correctional institution from 2006 to 2016, as well as their friends and family members, who used GTL's phone system, or who set up a payment account to talk with inmates in a New Jersey prison using GTL's Advance Pay system.

The relatives, friends and family of prisoners were required to set up a payment account to talk with their loved ones who were in a New Jersey prison using the defendant's Advance Pay system. Those affected by the defendant's rates estimate they were overcharged up to 100 times the market rate for phone calls.

"We are proud this long-running case has finally come to a successful result. The settlement prohibits all further delays in recovery on behalf of the class," said James Plaisted.

Justin Walder added, "This is an important recovery for incarcerated individuals and their mothers and grandmothers, children and spouses, and other family members who had no choice but to be controlled by the monopoly that set the phone rates. Communicating with loved ones in prison should not mean spending hard-earned money to satisfy exorbitant fees. Moreover, this ability to communicate has been proven to help reduce recidivism and helps prisoners' transition back into society."

The lawsuit originated in August 2013, alleging that the phone charges were unconscionable and violated the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, the Fifth Amendment's takings clause and various other aspects of New Jersey and federal law.

The case is *Bobbie James et al. v. Global Tel Link Corp. et al.*, case number 2:13-cv-04989.