

**Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Hearing on “Reassessing Solitary Confinement II:  
The Human Rights, Fiscal, and Public Safety Consequences”**

**Questions for the Record Submitted by Senator Al Franken**

**Questions for Charles Samuels**

**Question 1. During the hearing, you testified that most inmates in solitary confinement are limited to one telephone call per month.**

**(a) What is the Bureau’s justification for that limitation?**

Inmates housed in the Special Housing Unit (SHU) are currently permitted one telephone call per month, in addition to in person visits with family and friends and the opportunity to write and receive letters. All of these forms of communication are intended to allow inmates to maintain ties with family and friends.

Providing telephone calls to inmates in SHU requires direct observation and supervision by staff members who have a variety of other important duties related to ensuring the safety and security in SHU. Specifically, staff make frequent rounds and interact with the inmates, provide meals, escort inmates to and from recreation, and perform general unit security checks.

As I noted in my testimony, we are examining ways to potentially increase the availability of telephone contact for inmates in SHU without harming the safe and orderly operations of SHUs. I would be happy to provide you with an update on these plans as we move forward.

**(b) Do you disagree with the proposition that such limited contact with family compromises an inmate’s future prospects for successful reentry into his community?**

We are continuing our efforts to ensure inmates are placed in SHU only as necessary and for the appropriate duration. Limited contact with family and friends in SHU is one of the many aspects that are being reviewed by CNA as part of the independent audit, and we look forward to those results to further inform our SHU practices.