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# Opinion

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RECIPIENT OF THE  
 2006 PULITZER  
 GOLD MEDAL FOR  
 PUBLIC SERVICE

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## Don't limit inmates to postcards

Starting Monday, the Harrison County Sheriff's Department plans to prohibit all non-legal mail except postcards. Such a policy would both decrease public safety and place an enormous burden on the families of incarcerated people. Also, as the courts have ruled, other jails have found that banning letters to and from home doesn't actually cut costs.

My Prison Policy Initiative report, "Return to Sender: Postcard-only Policies in Jail" ([prisonpolicy.org/postcards](http://prisonpolicy.org/postcards)), finds postcard-only policies jeopardize critical social ties to families and friends, hindering re-entry and increasing the

chances that people will commit more crime in the future. These policies also stifle important family communication and raise the price kids and other family members must pay to stay in touch.

If the sheriff's department wants to increase public safety, it should immediately cancel the proposed postcard-only mail policy. The friends and loved ones of incarcerated people need to be allowed to maintain the connections that keep communities safe and families intact.

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