

Mikulski, O'Malley Issue Joint Statement on Cell Phone Jamming and Technology Demonstrations | [View Clip](#)

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 3, 2009) – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) and Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley today issued a joint statement on the importance of quick Senate passage of the Safe Prisons Communications Act of 2009, which allows states to petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the authority to “jam” – or block the use of cell phones from prison. Senator Mikulski is a Senate co-sponsor of the bill, which has been approved by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. Senate action could occur as early as this fall.

Today, in a demonstration organized by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, technology other than jammers will be tested to broaden the exposure of alternatives to call-jamming that may be used to manage the use of cell phones in prisons. This demonstration will take place at the State Correctional Facility in Jessup and is under an experimental, temporary license granted by the FCC.

The Mikulski-O'Malley statement follows:

“Law enforcement needs every tool available to fight the despicable crimes being committed by criminals using cell phones behind bars. This includes the technologies demonstrated here today, as well as cell phone jamming. While today's event was an important step in understanding all available options, just demonstrating these technologies required the State to overcome bureaucratic hurdles that could slow law enforcement's action. That's why it is critical for Congress to pass S. 251, the Safe Prisons Communications Act of 2009 and for federal agencies to support a demonstration of jamming technology. We must give law enforcement quick access to every technological tool available -- including cell phone jamming -- to combat illegal cell phone use on the inside and protect our neighbors and families on the outside.”

On June 15, 2009, the Senator and Governor sent a letter to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requesting that it join or support the demonstration of jamming technology at a Maryland prison. The NTIA oversees domestic telecommunications policy activities and resolves technical telecommunications issues for the Federal government and private sector.

Earlier this year, Governor O'Malley drafted language adopted as policy by the National Governors Association that urges the federal government “to grant states the authority to implement targeted use of wireless prison security technologies, such as ‘jamming.’”