

DEATH PENALTY ACTION

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Death Penalty Action Delivers Thousands of Petitions, Phone Calls to Governor Stitt Urging Clemency for Julius Jones.

Oklahoma City, OK - This morning Death Penalty Action delivered thousands of petition signatures to the office of Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt calling on him to follow the recommendation of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board to commute the death sentence of Julius Jones to life with the possibility of parole. The organization is also joining with allies to generate phone calls from within Oklahoma and across the country from concerned citizens.

"We do not believe that Julius Jones killed Paul Howell," said Abraham Bonowitz, director of Death Penalty Action. "However if it were true, the words of several members of the board of pardons are undeniable. First, 'there is too much doubt to execute him,' and second, 'the disparity in sentencing between Jones and his co-defendant is unacceptable.' The governor needs to hear that message from his own appointees to the pardon and parole board."

The petition submitted today with signatures gathered since the commutation recommendation is attached and features 16970 signers, reading as follows:

We are writing to you regarding Julius Jones, who is on death row in Oklahoma, despite maintaining his innocence and compelling evidence that he was wrongfully convicted for the murder of Paul Howell in 1999.

Many concerns have arisen that call into question Jones's conviction and sentence, including racial discrimination, newly-discovered evidence and a confession to the crime by a co-defendant. All of this was detailed in a clemency hearing on November 1st, resulting in a 3-1 vote in favor of commutation to a sentence of life WITH the possibility of parole.

We, the undersigned, ask Governor Stitt to commute Julius Jones' sentence to a sentence of life WITH the possibility of parole so that he is eligible for immediate parole consideration.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent and serious matter.

View each petition signer and the comments they left you in the attached PDF.

Death Penalty Action, a national group supporting anti-death penalty activists in Oklahoma, is calling for continued pressure on Governor Stitt. Activists have jammed phone lines at the Governor's Office for the past week and will continue to do so. The organization is responsible for bringing to Oklahoma the new, high visibility messaging tools (signs, banners, t-shirts) seen in recent protests.

"We wish nothing but peace to the family and friends of Paul Howell," said Bonowitz. "This protracted process and how it inhibits healing is one of the major problems of the death penalty. That, and the reality that politicians think executions serve the needs of victim families but are not even considered in the vast majority of cases. We can be safe from people who have committed violent crimes, and hold them accountable, without executions. In the interest of fairness, that is what we should be doing. We can also be redirecting all of these resources wasted on the death penalty to instead provide better supports for victims families, and better prevention of crime in the first place."

