



March 3, 2020

Governor Kay Ivey
Office of the Governor of Alabama
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130

Dear Governor Ivey,

We were each wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death, two of us in the state of Alabama, for crimes we did not commit. Today, we are part of Witness to Innocence, a national organization of death row exonerees helping to reform our country's criminal justice system. The years we spent on death row before proving our innocence gave us an up close look at capital punishment. We believe that the death penalty jeopardizes the integrity of Alabama's entire criminal justice system. There is far too much room for human error, not only the risk of executing innocent people like us, but also the impact of biases which lead to disproportionately more poor people and people of color receiving death sentences, the risk of executing the mentally ill, and the arbitrary and haphazard application of the punishment which results in little rhyme or reason for which cases result in a death sentence.

This week, Nathaniel Woods is scheduled to be executed. We urge you to grant a stay in Woods' case and impose a moratorium on all executions. The death penalty is a failed program that is being abandoned across the nation. Last year, Alabama was one of only seven states to carry out executions, and one of only three states to do so in these first months of 2020. While Alabama continues to kill its own citizens, other states have realized that the death penalty does not deter crime and that the money saved in not pursuing capital cases can fund the prosecution of far more crimes and better provide for public safety.

Not only are we one of the only states carrying out executions, Alabama is one of the only states to allow for non-unanimous death sentences. This was true in Nathaniel Woods' case where two of the members of the jury did not support a death sentence. Capital punishment is the highest and most severe penalty and should have the greatest level of safeguards against mistakes and misuse, such as requiring jury unanimity.

It is undisputed that Mr. Woods was not the triggerman and many people are arguing that he therefore should not be killed. Others feel strongly that he should die for the lives taken that tragic day. From our vantage point, however, we remember how passionate people were that we were guilty and should be executed. Given the state of our legal process, we cannot even be certain of a person's guilt, let alone certain of whether they *deserve to die*. As our Executive Director, Kirk Bloodsworth, says "we will have to save the lives of the guilty to ensure that no innocent life is taken. We must oppose all executions."

We personally do not think the death penalty is appropriate for anyone. Last year, in signing the Human Life Protection Act into law, you said that Alabamians have a "deeply held belief that every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God." We agree, every life is precious, and as innocent men who survived death row, we believe that God is the only one who has the right to take a life. Please spare the life of Nathaniel Woods. Please use your power as Governor to stop the killing and refrain from signing any future death warrants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirk Bloodsworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirk" being more prominent than the last name "Bloodsworth".

Kirk Bloodsworth, Executive Director

Exonerated in 1993 after 9 years in Maryland prison, two on death row

Gary Drinkard, Member

Exonerated in 2001 after nearly 6 years on Alabama's death row

Randall Padgett, Peer Specialist

Exonerated in 1997 after 5 years in Alabama prison, 3 on death row