



Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

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Breaking: PA Supreme Court Upholds Moratorium on Executions in the Commonwealth

(York PA) This afternoon, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision upholding the moratorium. The decision, written by Justice Baer states “... *we conclude that the reprieve issued by Governor Wolf is constitutionally sound.*”

The following quote can be attributed to Kathleen Lucas, Executive Director of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty: *“The Court was wise to uphold a pause in executions while the ongoing study commission on capital punishment completes its important work. It’s obvious that the system itself is broken and pushing to restart executions would be irresponsible.”*

The following quote can be attributed to Marc Bookman, Director of the Atlantic Center for Capital Representation: *“The unanimous decision by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court confirms that Governor Wolf’s decision to impose a moratorium was, in fact, completely lawful and constitutional. The District Attorneys’ Association attempt to use the death penalty as a political football has once again failed.”*

Today’s decision comes on the heels of the release of the annual report of the Death Penalty Information Center. That report shows that by every measure – public opinion, death sentences, and executions – the death penalty declined in 2015. Only six states carried out executions this year, and the 28 total executions in the U.S. marked the lowest number since 1991. In 2015, six people were exonerated from death row across the country, highlighting the ongoing risk of wrongful convictions in capital cases; six is also the number of men that have been exonerated from death row in Pennsylvania in the modern era of the death penalty.

“If the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is going to take the irrevocable step of executing a human being, its capital sentencing system must be infallible. Pennsylvania’s system is riddled with flaws, making it error prone, expensive, and anything but infallible.”

—Governor Tom Wolf, announcing moratorium on executions in Pennsylvania

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