



November 5, 2019

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Texas Governor
P.O. Box 78711 | Austin, TX 78711-2428

David Gutiérrez
Chair, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
and the Executive Clemency Section
8610 Shoal Creek Blvd. | Austin, TX 78757

re: Rodney Reed Reprieve

Dear Governor Abbott, Chair Gutiérrez, and Board Members:

We write to urge you to grant a reprieve to Rodney Reed.

As you know, the case that put Mr. Reed on death row has been called into serious question by compelling new witness statements and forensic evidence along with evidentiary gaps that could be filled with additional investigation and testing. We appreciate how difficult decisions like this are and know how seriously you take them, but this is also an opportunity for you to prevent a rush to execution before these new leads are properly explored.

One thing we often grapple with when discussing criminal justice reform is balancing justice with mercy, particularly when we consider a heinous crime. Yet one of the reasons that is so difficult to do in a capital case is because, at times, we find defects within our system that give even those who support the concept of the death penalty pause. Killing Rodney Reed without certainty about his guilt may exacerbate that issue and erode public trust—not only in capital punishment, but in Texas justice itself.

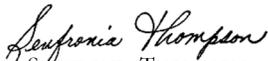
Mr. Reed's case recalls the sentiment then-Governor George W. Bush expressed in 1998 when he commuted the sentence against Henry Lee Lucas in the face of grave doubt about his guilt. "As a supporter of the death penalty . . . I feel a special obligation to make sure the State of Texas never executes a person for a crime they may not have committed," he said. "I take this action so that all Texas can continue to trust the integrity and fairness of our justice system."



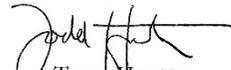
Similarly, granting Mr. Reed a reprieve until the new developments in his case are fully resolved will allow the cloud of doubt surrounding his guilt to be lifted. Only then should our justice system proceed, one way or the other, with decisions that cannot be undone.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration and your leadership on this issue.

Respectfully,

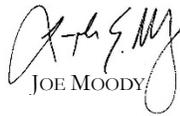

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