



OKLAHOMA STATE CONFERENCE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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October 21, 2019

Governor John Kevin Stitt
2300 N Lincoln Blvd
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
2015 N. Classen # 45
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

Dear Governor Stitt and Members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board,

On behalf of Oklahoma State Conference National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), we support the request for commutation of Julius Darius Jones' death sentence to time served. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), over its more than 100-year history, has adamantly opposed the death penalty, due to its racially disparate application. It has been our historical mission to eliminate race-based discrimination within the criminal justice system.

While working to address the injustices in Mr. Jones' case, we would like to sincerely express our deepest sympathy to the Howell family, who have suffered in unimaginable ways since the death of Mr. Paul Howell.

Oklahoma has a longstanding history of wrongful convictions, exonerations, mass incarcerations, and racially charged accusations, as exemplified by the 1921 Tulsa Riots, which is a national disgrace. In order to correct the wrongs of the past and move forward as a more ethical state, cases such as Mr. Jones must be seriously reconsidered. Mr. Jones' story highlights the longstanding racial discrimination that has permeated the criminal justice system in America and more specifically, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma has historically faced an indigent defense funding crisis, which has adversely impacted the state's public defender system. African Americans are disproportionately represented nationally on death row and among those who have been executed. Black people

make up 13 percent of the population, but they make up 42 percent of death row and 35 percent of those executed (See the NAACP's Death Penalty Fact Sheet, <http://www.naacp.org/latest/naacp-death-penalty-fact-sheet>). Beyond these crucial facts, the compelling and factual reasons listed below justify the urgent need to commute Julius Darius Jones' death sentence.

"The troubling issues in Mr. Jones' case is frighteningly similar to those found in many of the cases of men and women who were fortunate to be exonerated before their death sentences were carried out. The vast majority of these cases, as with Mr. Jones' case, have zero physical evidence and rely solely on witness testimony, circumstantial evidence, and faulty or fraudulent forensic evidence.

Mr. Jones' innocence is supported by eyewitness testimony. At the trial, the only eyewitness in this case identified the shooter as having half an inch of hair sticking out from underneath a stocking cap. This description absolutely did not fit Mr. Jones' appearance. The eye witness' description did, however, fit the appearance of the co-defendant, an individual who struck a deal with prosecutors to testify against.

Mr. Jones' and his family have suffered an egregious injustice. Mr. Julius Darius Jones' case demonstrates an ineffective and negligent public defense. No one should die because they are unable to afford adequate counsel.

NAACP founding member, W.E.B. DuBois, once said that racial injustice continues to be "America's blind spot." Governor Stitt and members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board, we ask you to commute Mr. Julius Darius Jones' sentence, so that justice is not further abandoned because of Oklahoma's blind spot.

For more information please contact Evelyn Nephew, Secretary (405) 427-8000 or oknaacp@oknaacp.org.

Sincerely,

Anthony R. Douglas, President
Oklahoma State Conference, NAACP
Member National Board of Directors, NAACP

Cc: Miller Newman, 1st V.P. Oklahoma State Conference
Richard Allen, 2nd V.P. Oklahoma State Conference
Evelyn Nephew, Secretary, Oklahoma State Conference
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, (NAACP)

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.