



November 7, 2019

Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711-2428

Dear Governor Abbott:

Oregon Innocence Project works to exonerate those wrongfully convicted in Oregon. We have been made aware that on November 20, 2019, Texas is scheduled to execute Rodney Reed, a man whose innocence appears manifest and who still has appeals pending in the federal courts. You have the responsibility and ability to prevent this grave injustice.

Mr. Reed has been repeatedly denied the opportunity to prove his innocence and the true perpetrator's guilt through DNA testing of crucial evidence, including the murder weapon. Even so, the state's case against Mr. Reed is already completely discredited. Three of the state's experts admitted errors in their testimony, rendering the timeline for Mr. Reed killing Stacey Stites implausible. Additionally, four forensic pathologists confirm that the only thing linking Mr. Reed to the crime was semen found in Ms. Stites' body, which supports Mr. Reed's protestation that he had a consensual relationship with Ms. Stites that the state could not accept. New witnesses have also come forward stating Mr. Reed and Ms. Stites were romantically involved.

The alternate suspect, Ms. Stites' disgruntled fiancée, had motive to harm her and made inconsistent statements about his whereabouts on the night of the murder. Witnesses have also described his incriminating statements before and after Ms. Stites' death. Finally, on October 29, 2019, a man previously incarcerated with the alternate suspect revealed the suspect had confessed in 2010, bragging, "I had to kill my n*****-loving fiancée."

Had Mr. Reed, a black man convicted of killing a white woman by an all-white jury, been given the fairness owed him by the Constitution, he would not have been convicted. Executing him without allowing evidence of his innocence to be presented to the federal courts is a further violation of his rights under the Constitution.

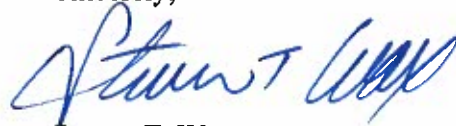
Since 1973, 166 people have been released from death row after evidence of their innocence was uncovered. This means that for every ten people executed in the United States, one innocent person has been exonerated. There is also strong evidence that in recent history, Texas has executed five innocent people.

We tolerate [these errors] because we have a consciousness that says what happens to those people isn't really that bad. It is the same consciousness that allowed us to tolerate thousands of lynchings. And, to understand the consciousness that would give rise to that, you have to remember how the courts had created this idea that these black people

are not people, they are not fully human. In so in that sense you can't disconnect the death penalty from the legacy of lynching; you can't disconnect the legacy of lynching from the era of enslavement. I think that this line is a very real one. And, if we don't recognize that line, we are not going to see the way that line will continue to claim lives unfairly.

Bryan Stevenson, *True Justice*. Mr. Reed's case is not an aberration. Your granting him clemency or commutation would serve the interests of justice.

Sincerely,



Steven T. Wax
Legal Director

Brittney Plesser
Staff Attorney

Alex Meggitt
Staff Attorney