



For Immediate Release
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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Arkansas's Extreme Execution Schedule

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) condemns the state of Arkansas' execution of Ledell Lee, Jack Jones, and Marcel Williams, and urges an immediate stay for Kenneth Williams, who is scheduled to be executed later today. On April 12, LDF sent a [letter](#) to Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson explaining how and why his original plan to execute 8 men in 10 days was not only cruel, it also increased the risk of wrongful executions. LDF is gratified that the courts intervened and stayed four of the scheduled executions, but remains deeply concerned that Mr. Lee, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Williams were executed in the face of significant unresolved constitutional and procedural questions regarding innocence, intellectual ability, and the right to effective assistance of counsel. And LDF is alarmed by the fact that Kenneth Williams's case presents equally weighty concerns yet his life remains in jeopardy. [Christina Swarns](#), LDF's Director of Litigation issued the following statement:

“The state of Arkansas let the fate of four human beings be dictated by the randomness of an expiration date, ruthlessly shunning justice in favor of expedience. In determining who shall live and who shall die, Arkansas ignored inadequate representation and, in one case, potentially exculpatory evidence, instead ushering men with histories of mental illness and horrific abuse to their deaths. Ledell Lee, Jack Jones, and Marcel Williams were not just denied full access to the clemency process, but also to human decency. We hope that Kenneth Williams will not face the same unlawful end. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of all those who have lost loved ones to violent injustice, including the death penalty.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.