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LDF Commends President Biden's Historic Clemency Efforts, Urges President to Commute the Death Sentences of All on Federal Death Row

Today, President Biden granted commutations to nearly 1,500 people serving the remainder of their sentences in home confinement under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act was enacted in March 2020 and was later expanded to allow certain medically vulnerable people in federal prisons to be released into federal custody and reunited with their families to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Additionally, President Biden also pardoned 39 people who had been convicted of non-violent offenses that have successfully reintegrated and are contributing to their communities.

In response, **Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Director of Policy Demetria McCain** issued the following statement:

"Today's commutations and pardons are a remarkable effort to address injustice and promote rehabilitation, and yet we remain at a critical inflection point where thousands of people who would have shorter sentences under today's laws and policies are still confined behind bars. Since the CARES Act's inception, 13,000 people were transferred to home confinement with negligible recidivism rates, suggesting there are plenty of people our bloated federal prisons hold, who are disproportionately Black and Brown and do not need to be there.

"This moment requires unrelenting action, and we are hopeful President Biden will continue his steadfast commitment to advancing justice and also commute the sentences of every person on federal death row. This is urgent because we anticipate the incoming administration will recommit to imposing a death penalty rife with unconscionable racial bias, which will invariably continue to sentence Black people to death and devastate Black communities at disproportionate rates."

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Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.