



For Immediate Release
Monday, December 23, 2024

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LDF Commends President Biden's Historic Commutations of Over Three Dozen Persons on Death Row

Today, President Biden granted commutations to nearly all persons who were facing execution on federal death row.

In response, **Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson** issued the following statement:

“We commend President Biden for using his clemency powers to address systemic injustice and save the lives of 37 people on death row in a historic and courageous act of mercy and compassion. Today’s commutations are a momentous step towards redressing the death penalty’s long history of racialized, systemic violence and its inefficacy as a form of punishment.

“Since our founding, LDF has opposed the death penalty in all cases. There are no circumstances under which the death penalty should be administered. Capital punishment is an arcane and barbaric system built on prioritizing retribution over rehabilitation, and has resulted in the execution of people in cases marred by racial discrimination, as well as people with intellectual disabilities, serious mental illness, ineffective legal assistance, and those who are innocent. President Biden’s laudable clemency actions bring this country one step closer to adopting a criminal legal system that prioritizes restorative justice over fatal violence.

“We urge President Biden to issue additional grants of clemency before he leaves office, including the commutations of those remaining on federal death row, the thousands of people incarcerated under sentences they would not receive under today’s laws, and the many other individuals who are serving unfair sentences as a result of unjust laws and practices.”

Previously, LDF joined partners across the civil and human rights movement to [call](#) on President Biden to use his remaining time in office to commute the sentences of all 40 individuals on federal death row.

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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.