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LDF Condemns Georgia’s Resumption of Death Penalty Executions

The state of Georgia executed Willie James Pye via lethal injection late Wednesday evening after the Georgia Parole Board denied his request for clemency based on his intellectual disability and the gross ineffectiveness of his trial counsel.

Prior to Mr. Pye’s execution, Georgia had not executed anyone in four years. In response, the [Legal Defense Fund’s](#) (LDF) Director of Strategic Initiatives Jin Hee Lee issued the following statement:

“The execution of Willie Pye is a tragic example of the extreme inequities and inhumanity of our capital punishment system. With his life on the line, Mr. Pye was appointed an attorney overwhelmed with hundreds of felony cases and ill-prepared to provide the legal representation required by our Constitution. Moreover, Mr. Pye’s intellectual disability should have automatically disqualified him from execution. There is no evidence that the death penalty improves safety or otherwise benefits our society. Instead, it is a barbaric form of punishment to which the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are relegated.

“The need to abolish the death penalty in Georgia and throughout the United States is long overdue and is especially urgent as states resume executions or otherwise decide to test novel execution methods. We can achieve justice for even the most heinous crimes while remaining true to our humanity.”

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