



# Seizing the Momentum

Summer 2017

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

## Political Advocacy Doesn't Begin or End at the State Capitol

The special session of the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature began on July 18, 2017 and will last for 30 days. During the special session, lawmakers will consider 20 items designated specifically by Governor Greg Abbott. Lawmakers can introduce other pieces of legislation during this time, as well, but the Governor must officially add these items to the agenda for them to move forward in the process.

Lawmakers' presence in the State Capitol isn't the only time for you to engage with your elected representative and senator, however. In fact, the interim period between legislative sessions is the PRIME TIME for you to get involved in the Texas political process! You'll generally find legislators more accessible and open to hearing from you, their constituents, when they are not in Austin.

As we head into the next election cycle, beginning with the Texas primary in March 2018 and the general election in November, we strongly encourage you to attend local political events and build relationships with your current elected officials, as well as candidates running for office.

Here are some ideas for your involvement in the 2018 elections; keep in mind that these apply both to state and local races:

- Participate in town hall meetings, candidate debates, open houses, and other forums for engaging with candidates and elected officials; ask the candidates about their approach to criminal justice issues
- Attend meetings of local political/civic groups
- Attend precinct and district conventions (in the spring) and state political conventions (in the summer); contact us about providing information on the death penalty at these events
- Pay attention to important local elections that impact use of the death penalty in your county; these include candidates for district attorney, county judge and county commissioners, and state district judges
- Learn about the candidates seeking a position on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
- Schedule a meeting with your current state senator and state representative in their district offices; contact TCADP if you would like to learn more about your lawmakers and their position on death penalty issues. We also can connect you with other TCADP members in your district if you would like to organize a small delegation to join you for a meeting.

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### Also in this issue:

Meet TCADP's New Board Member  
North Texas Roundup  
*In Memoriam*  
Thank You Donors!  
Save the date: 2018 Annual Conference

### Scheduled Executions 2017

July

27– TaiChin Preyor (Executed)

August

30– Steven Long

September

7– Juan Castillo



## Continued: Political Advocacy Doesn't Begin or End at the State Capitol

These activities help us keep the death penalty and other criminal justice issues on the radar of candidates and elected officials. Contact us for information and handouts to take to meetings, talking points for legislative visits, and ideas for questions to ask during town hall meetings or candidate debates.

TCADP is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means that we are not allowed to get involved in political campaigns or endorse candidates. We also are strictly non-partisan. We encourage you to consider supporting local campaigns as an individual voter, however. Working on campaigns is a great way to build relationships with elected officials and other political activists in your community.

Stay tuned to TCADP for any relevant updates on the special session of the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature and additional ideas for political engagement!

### General Rules for Legislative Office Visits and Meetings with Candidates

1. **ALWAYS** be polite even if they aren't. They do remember visitors who are nice.
2. If you are granted a one-on-one meeting with a staffer or the legislator, **ALWAYS** send a hand-written thank you note to their office. Again, they remember that.
3. When visiting, always **sign the guest book**.
4. **Follow your legislators** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. When they post, LIKE it and reply when appropriate; also reply appropriately as well.

*From Casey Magnuson, TCADP Board Treasurer and veteran Lobby Corps Member*

### TCADP Welcomes New Board Member



TCADP is proud to introduce our newest board member. Dr. Kimberly Harrison was appointed by the Board of Directors in April to fill a vacant position. Kimberly is a forensic psychologist in private practice in Austin, Texas. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Texas A&M University and her Master's degree and doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of North Texas. After completing her postdoctoral fellowship in forensic clinical psychology at State Operated Forensic Services in Minnesota, she worked as Chief Psychologist at the Forensic Evaluation Service of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health in Columbia, South Carolina. During her time in South Carolina, she also served as an Assistant Professor of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. Since moving to Austin in 2014, her professional practice has focused on forensic evaluations of individuals involved in criminal and civil courts. She has

co-authored over a dozen peer-reviewed articles pertaining to mental health issues in the criminal justice system.



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Vanessa Akins, Communications Coordinator  
Jason Redick, North Texas Outreach Coordinator

### Seizing the Momentum

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TCADP would like to give a special thanks to Jennifer DuBois and Bob Van Steenberg for volunteering in the TCADP office!



## Texas Death Penalty Developments (As of July 28, 2017)

**Executions:** 5 out of 16 nationwide

**Stays of execution granted:** 4

**Scheduled executions in 2017:** 4

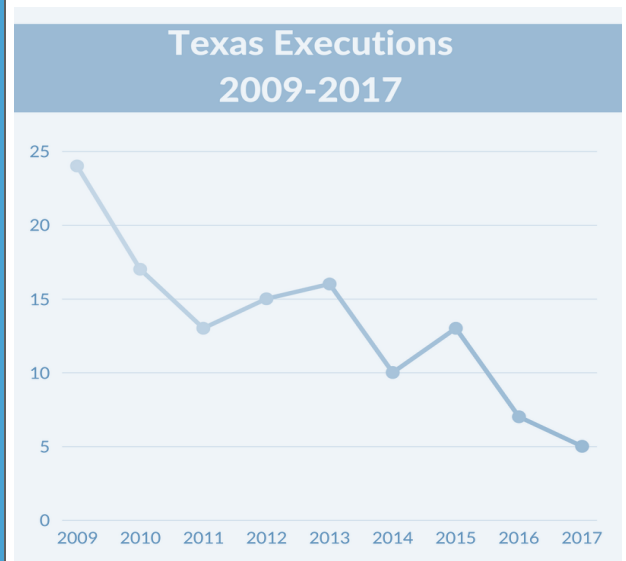
**States that have carried out executions this year:** 6 (Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Virginia, Alabama, and Ohio)

**Individuals currently on death row in Texas:** 234

**New death sentences:** 2 (Angelina and Jefferson County)

**Jury rejections of death penalty:** 2 (Dallas County)

More information on specific cases is available at [www.tcadp.org](http://www.tcadp.org).



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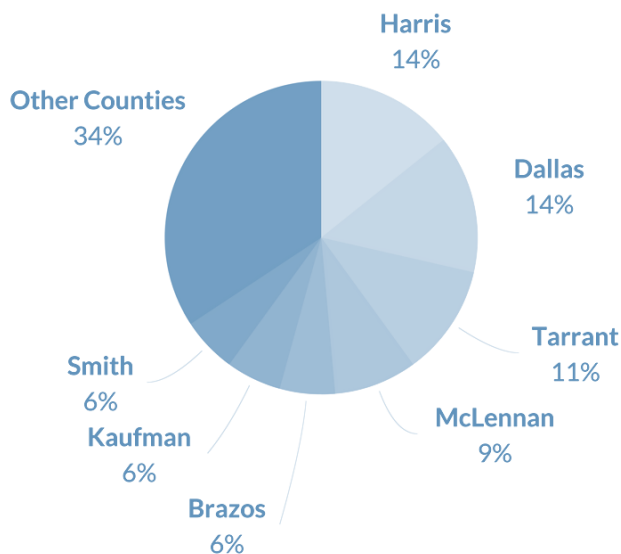
View photos from our events, connect with more than 4,900 other supporters, and learn about important death penalty developments. "Like" us today!



This has been another big year of developments for the movement against the death penalty in North Texas. We have seen juries reject the death penalty in two high-profile capital murder cases in Dallas, as well as several stays of execution. My work has continued to keep me busy in connecting with local community and faith leaders. These conversations center around faithful and trauma-informed responses to violence. Our North Texas area is desperate for actions that prevent further violence in our communities. We must urge our elected officials to enact public policies with this goal in mind, instead of continuing to waste millions of dollars on death penalty cases.

I've been involved with social change movements for a number of years now, and I can honestly say that North Texas is on the verge of making some major strides towards justice for our communities. If you are interested in hearing how you can support and connect with my work in Dallas or Tarrant Counties, please feel free to send me an email at Jason@tcadp.org or give me a call at (972)824-5847!

## Texas' Highest Sentencing Counties (2012-2017)



**“In the 15 death penalty cases tried in Texas since 2015, jurors have sent only eight men to death row.”**

*Dallas Morning News, “Is the death penalty dying in Dallas County?” June 2, 2017*

**“Texas can live without the death penalty — and is better off without it.”**

*Dallas Morning News, “Are Texas juries making a case for the end of the death penalty?” June 5, 2017*

### In Memoriam



We were deeply saddened to learn about the sudden death of TCADP Member **Kelly Reid** on May 7, 2017. Kelly, who lived in Ontario, Canada, was a delightful and generous person who provided friendship to several individuals on death row in Texas. We will miss seeing her at the TCADP Annual Conference and hearing her great laugh. We extend our sincere sympathies to all of her friends and family.

Kelly, as well as being a loving and devoted Wife and Mother, lived a full and vibrant life working for the betterment of her community. She was an involved member of Knox Presbyterian Church, championed many environmental initiatives and participated in politics. She loved her gardens, exploring the many wonders of our area but most of all she loved being with her family and friends.



## Thank You for Your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following organizations and individuals who contributed between April 25 to July 27, 2017. Your financial support is critical to the activities and events described in this newsletter. Please let us know if we inadvertently left you or anyone in your household off this list. We apologize in advance if we missed anyone.

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 Marie Racine

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 Dr. Mike Renquist and Rev. Dr.  
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 Fort Worth Religious Society of  
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 St. John's United Methodist Church  
 (Austin)  
  
 \*Partners for Justice or Sustaining  
 Members (TCADP's recurring giving  
 program.

# Thanks

YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**2.17.2018**

**ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**



**DALLAS, TEXAS**

For more information, please visit  
<http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/>.