



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TCADP Annual Conference to Address Changing Death Penalty Landscape**

*Statewide gathering will honor State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. and Texas death row exoneree Alfred Dewayne Brown*

**(Austin, Texas)** — Advocates from across Texas will gather this Saturday, February 18, 2017 at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP). This event, *Moving to Higher Ground*, will feature workshops, a keynote address, and a panel discussion featuring several local journalists who cover death penalty issues.

Brian Stolarz will provide the keynote address. Stolarz served as habeas corpus counsel to Alfred Dewayne Brown, who was exonerated in June 2015 after spending 10 years on Texas' death row. His book about the case, [Grace and Justice on Death Row: The Race Against Time and Texas to Free an Innocent Man](#), was published in 2016 and is a *Washington Post* best-seller.

During the conference, TCADP will honor Alfred Dewayne Brown with the 2017 Courage Award in recognition of the 10 years he spent as an innocent man on Texas' death row and his continued pursuit of justice and compensation from the State. On June 8, 2015, the Harris County District Attorney's Office dismissed capital murder charges against Brown, who was wrongly convicted in the murders of Houston Police Officer Charles R. Clark and store clerk Alfredia Jones at a check-cashing business in 2003.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals overturned Brown's conviction and death sentence on November 5, 2014, after finding the Harris County District Attorney's Office withheld material evidence favorable to his case, specifically, a record of a phone call that corroborated his alibi. In 2013, a homicide detective found a box of phone records in his garage that indicated Brown made the call exactly when he asserted. The evidence was never shared with Brown's defense counsel.

Brown is the 13<sup>th</sup> person to be exonerated from death row in Texas. A total of 157 people have been exonerated from death rows nationwide since 1973.

The 2017 Founder's Award will be presented State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) in honor of his significant contributions to the cause of ending the death penalty, particularly his sponsorship of the first death penalty repeal bill to be introduced in the Texas Senate and his advocacy for alternatives to capital punishment.

A leader on education, healthcare and economic development, Senator Lucio, Jr. represents Senate District 27. He is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations and a former educator and coach. In the 79th Legislative session, he authored the bill establishing Life Without Parole in Texas, and in the 84th Legislature, he authored SB 1661, a bill to repeal the death penalty in Texas. His current death penalty repeal bill, Senate Bill 597, was filed on January 24, 2017.

"As a pro-lifetime legislator, I am honored to receive this recognition from the Texas Coalition," said Senator Lucio. "Since 2005, when my bill giving capital juries the option of imposing a sentence of life

without parole finally passed, we have witnessed a dramatic reduction in use of the death penalty in Texas. It is now time to take the next step and rid our state of capital punishment altogether.”

Death penalty repeal legislation also has been filed in the Texas House of Representatives by State Representative Jessica Farrar (D-Houston). House Bill 1537, filed on February 3, 2017, repeals the death penalty in Texas and replaces it with Life in Prison Without the Possibility of Parole. The House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee has considered similar legislation in the past four legislative sessions.

The TCADP 2017 Annual Conference will take place at St. David’s Episcopal Church, 301 E. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, Texas 78701, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The keynote address and awards ceremony will take place from 12:30 to 2:00 PM. All are welcome.

For more information about the conference, visit <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/> or contact Kristin Houlé at the information listed above.

TCADP 2017 Annual Conference "Moving to Higher Ground" @TCADPdotORG #tcadp17

TCADP is a statewide, grassroots advocacy organization based in Austin.

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