



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty on the Execution of Edward Busby, the 600th Person Put to Death by Texas Since 1982

Tonight, Thursday, May 14, 2026, the State of Texas executed Edward Lee Busby, Jr., despite agreement from experts that he had intellectual disability and should have been exempt from the death penalty.

Around 5:00 PM CT, after an agonizing day of waiting and just an hour before the execution process was set to begin, the Supreme Court of the United States vacated the stay the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals had granted last Friday.

The vote was 6 to 3, with Justice Jackson, joined by Justice Sotomayor, forcefully dissenting: “In capital cases, we rarely intervene to preserve life. I cannot understand the Court’s rush to extinguish it, much less in the circumstances of this case. With respect, I dissent.” The majority did not provide an explanation for their vote.

Mr. Busby, a Black man, was convicted of kidnapping and killing Laura Lee Crane in 2005 in Tarrant County, where prosecutors continue to seek the ultimate punishment at an alarming rate that disproportionately targets people of color. His case exemplifies everything that is wrong with the Texas death penalty: its arbitrariness and geographic isolation; its racially biased application; and the procedural barriers to relief, even in the face of egregious constitutional violations.

Mr. Busby was the 600th person put to death by the State of Texas in the modern death penalty era. The first was Charlie Brooks, a Black man also convicted in Tarrant County, who was executed on December 7, 1982.

TCADP laments the 600 lives ended by the State of Texas and the harm suffered by all Texans impacted by violence. This milestone represents not just the men and women killed by the State but the thousands upon thousands of people who have been impacted by the death penalty system: the friends and family of the victims; the friends and family of the defendants;

the more than 8,400 jurors who served their civic duty; the legal teams; the corrections officers on death row and at the Huntsville Unit; the journalists who have covered these cases and/or witnessed executions; and so many others.

As we reflect on this grim milestone, we must also acknowledge the tremendous shifts that have occurred in the Texas death penalty landscape in recent years. Executions reflect the legacy of Texas's use of the death penalty more than its current sentencing practices, as most executions today stem from death sentences that were imposed decades ago.

The significant decline in death sentences and executions over the past decade strongly indicates that most of the individuals executed by Texas over the last 44 years would not be sentenced to death if they were charged and tried today.

Seventy-one percent of these 600 executions occurred between 1996 and 2015; in the last decade, the State has put 69 people to death. Both executions and death sentences in Texas have remained at record low levels for the past seven years.

See a visual depiction of these trends from the Death Penalty Information Center:
<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/will-a-person-with-intellectual-disability-become-texas-600th-execution-in-the-modern-era>.

Texans are increasingly abandoning the death penalty as a path to justice. Only a handful of counties continue to pursue new death sentences. Where the death penalty is still used in Texas, it is arbitrary and racially biased, and it continues to ensnare innocent and vulnerable people, all at a tremendous expense to taxpayers.

Tonight, our thoughts are with Mr. Busby, his family, and his legal team, the family of Laura Lee Crane, and with all Texans who seek a fairer, more proportionate justice system: one that is restorative and redemptive, that recognizes an individual's capacity for change and holds people accountable for their actions without denying their humanity. TCADP will continue to advocate for such a system as we work to end the death penalty once and for all

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The Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty is the only statewide grassroots advocacy organization dedicated solely to ending the death penalty in Texas. Led by staff in Austin and Houston, TCADP collaborates with local, state, and national partners to reduce the use of the death penalty and advocate for change at the county and state levels.