Dear Governor Stitt and Members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us that it is through Him that we live, move and have our being, and without Him (His grace), we can do nothing. Today, by His grace and in humility, we write knowing that you are also a recipient of grace from the same Giver, Who has allowed you to lead Oklahomans toward the future.

In your impactful inaugural speech on January 14th, 2019, you spoke about the much-needed advent of Oklahoma’s turnaround. It was a speech that highlighted necessary and constructive changes that would facilitate economic growth, educational improvement and criminal justice reform in Oklahoma. We want you to know that we are in full agreement with you, and we want to see those changes materialize in every community in our state. In addition to the emphasis on education, economy and criminal reform, you expressed that the fruition of Oklahoma’s turnaround “starts with accountability.” Your clear message was -- Oklahoma cannot make a turnaround, if that turnaround is not predicated on accountability.

Governor Stitt, we write to you today seeking justice in Oklahoma, in the form of accountability.  Due to the lack of accountability, a grave injustice continues to transpire in our state, and it has spanned two decades. A man by the name of Julius Jones has been on death row in Oklahoma, despite compelling evidence of an unreliable murder conviction and racial bias that has adversely affected his case. At the time of the crime, Julius was a 19-year-old student athlete with high aspirations at the University of Oklahoma. He was on a full academic scholarship, and had the strong support of his hard-working parents who taught him constructive ethics and values. Mr. Jones’ troubling case sadly includes instances of prosecutorial misconduct, compromised forensic evidence and disproportionate sentencing. Statistics also show that Oklahoma has wielded the death penalty against African American men disproportionately. If accountability and a fair review is precluded from Mr. Jones’ capital sentence, the State of Oklahoma would be executing him *“without a single court having reviewed or allowed Mr. Jones to factually develop the merits of his newly-available federal constitutional claim regarding a juror who told another juror that the trial was a waste of time and “they should just take the n-word out and shoot him behind the jail.”* (Petition for Writ of Certiorari at p.40).

Today, we are asking that Oklahoma’s turnaround not exclude the unjust conviction of Julius Jones.  We believe in your vision for Oklahoma and for its progress. We are praying for our state and for its path towards a brighter future.

Sincerely,

The Black Ministerial Alliance of Oklahoma City