

2300 NORTH LINCOLN BOULEVARD  
STATE CAPITOL BUILDING ROOM 539  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-4885  
JASON.DUNNINGTON@OKHOUSE.GOV  
(405)557-7396



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**HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES**  
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*State of Oklahoma*

REPRESENTATIVE JASON DUNNINGTON, PH.D.  
OKLAHOMA HOUSE DISTRICT 88

November 12, 2019

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt  
Governor of Oklahoma  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Governor Stitt,

I am writing to convey my deep concerns regarding the death row case of Julius Jones (#270147OSP). As many others in our state and around the country have voiced, there remain serious questions regarding the reliability of his conviction. Knowing what we know now about our state's continued need for criminal justice reforms, due diligence requires that we thoughtfully re-examine Mr. Jones' case.

I am especially concerned that racial discrimination may have played a role in his trial. Mr. Jones' jury only consisted of one African American, and, reportedly, a white juror used a racial slur when referring to Mr. Jones during the proceedings. Moreover, his attorneys at that time have publicly stated that they were under-resourced and unprepared to defend a death penalty case. One of the attorneys was still in law school when the crime was committed. Because of these factors, key evidence, such as an official photo of Mr. Jones ten days prior to the crime, was not presented, which would have contradicted the eyewitness' description of the shooter.

In June 2016, The Fair Punishment Project at Harvard Law School published a report called "*America's Top Five Deadliest Prosecutors: How Overzealous Personalities Drive the Death Penalty*". In this report, former Oklahoma County District Attorney, Bob "Cowboy" Macy, was named among the five deadliest prosecutors in the nation. Alarming, the courts found evidence of prosecutorial misconduct in 33% of Mr. Macy's death penalty cases.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://fairpunishment.org/new-report-finds-prosecutors-who-sought-death-penalty-most-frequently-had-high-rates-of-misconduct/>

In 2015, University of Oklahoma sociology professor, Dr. Susan Sharp Crow, along with criminology professors at other academic institutions conducted a study on race and the death penalty in Oklahoma between the years 1990-2012. The study found that though African Americans account for only 8% of Oklahoma's population, they account for 45% of those on Oklahoma's death row. Also, according to the study, black males in Oklahoma are three times more likely to receive the death penalty than white males who are convicted of similar crimes. These findings were included in the Oklahoma Death Penalty Review Commission's 300-page report<sup>2</sup>, which stated, "*Oklahoma's death penalty system is not working, and without major changes, Oklahoma risks executing innocent people.*"

Considering the severity of the information we now know about our state's past criminal justice system, including scientific conclusions regarding explicit racial bias, I respectfully ask for your utmost consideration of Mr. Julius' commutation application. It is our responsibility as lawmakers and leaders in this state to work towards making sure our citizens are given the rights and privileges under the law. We have an opportunity now to correct this injustice, admit to past failings, and restore hope in our criminal justice system for all of our constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Dunnington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jason Dunnington  
State Representative  
House District 88

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OklaDeathPenalty.pdf>