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Governor John Bel Edwards
Post Office Box 94004
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Dear Governor Edwards,

Louisiana currently has over 70 inmates on death row awaiting execution and the State has not carried out a death sentence since 2010, even though a large and growing number of victims' families suffer in legal limbo waiting for justice to be carried out. I write today in support of those crime victims.

As you know, your legal counsel for the Department of Corrections (DOC) recently filed motions in federal court voluntarily agreeing to stay, and delay again, all executions for yet another year.

In light of your Administration's latest decision to not pursue justice for victims and their families and to unnecessarily tie the DOC's hands by ceding control to a federal court, I have directed DOJ attorneys to **withdraw** from further representing the DOC in this case. My decision does not come lightly or without exhaustive efforts to get your Administration to work with our team to bring our State's most monstrous criminals to justice.

When I took office, I was approached by several District Attorneys who expressed concern about DOC's failure to see that justice is carried out in cases their offices had prosecuted, all of which involved heinous crimes and many of which involved vicious assaults and murders of young children. I instructed attorneys in my office to work with the DOC to identify roadblocks and how we could facilitate moving past them.

I was informed of two specific obstacles: a legal obstacle arising from the pending litigation in *Hoffman v. Jindal* and an obstacle arising from difficulty in obtaining the necessary drugs. In an effort to find solutions on both fronts, I took several steps.

I involved DOJ attorneys in *Hoffman* and then convened meetings at DOC with interested Assistant District Attorneys, DOC staff, and DOC Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc to address the obstacles in obtaining the drugs, find ways to work around any impediments, and develop a concrete path forward.

At all of these meetings, we reaffirmed our willingness to bring whatever resources are necessary to help the DOC overcome any legal or logistical obstacles, to clear the path, and to permit justice to be carried out for these crime victims and their frustrated families.

Following research into compounding pharmacies and potential legal hurdles related to their use – we learned that the DOC already has the capacity to use a single-drug (Pentobarbital), which is the same drug recently used in Texas, Georgia, and Missouri. Additionally, we discussed legislation that could expand the State’s options in the event the drugs are not obtainable.

However, I discovered the biggest obstacle to getting justice for our State’s crime victims was neither the federal case nor the difficulty obtaining drugs; it has and continues to be your unwillingness to proceed with *any* executions.

In the last two years – Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Virginia have all navigated similar obstacles and successfully carried out sentences of execution. In April 2017, Arkansas carried out two executions in one day. And in the first six months of this year, Texas successfully carried out seven executions. Alabama, which carried out two executions this year, recently expanded its options to include electrocution, nitrogen hypoxia, and lethal injection. A legal challenge in Alabama similar to the one lodged here was recently dismissed as moot after Alabama expanded its law. Missouri likewise authorizes the use of lethal gas, and several states permit death by hanging or firing squad.

All of this begs the question that only you can answer: why do victims’ rights matter in Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, and Virginia but not in Louisiana?

I remain committed to fighting for our crime victims and their families, who have already waited too long to see justice carried out. I encourage you to change your position and work with the DOJ to see justice carried out.

For Louisiana,



Jeff Landry
Attorney General

cc: Louisiana District Attorneys Association
Louisiana Sheriffs Association
Crimefighters of Louisiana