

March 7, 2021

Office of Arizona Governor
Doug Ducey
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey,

We write to you today deeply troubled by the news that Arizona is seeking to resume executions. It has been seven years since Arizona's last, [badly botched](#) execution. Our concerns are myriad and include the fact that the death penalty continues to be applied in a racist manner, is error-prone, costly, and disproportionately targets vulnerable individuals — including youth and those with intellectual disabilities and brain injuries, mental illness, and histories of childhood abuse and trauma. We urge you to reconsider the decision to resume executions.

Since 1973, at least 185 innocent people have been exonerated from death rows across the country. [Ten of these people](#) were wrongfully convicted in Arizona. Black people and people of color are disproportionately victims of wrongful conviction and are sentenced to death at much higher rates than white people. Nationwide, people convicted of killing white people are [17 times more likely to be executed](#) than people convicted of killing Black people. This disparity is a somber reminder that the death penalty evolved in this country from lynching and cannot be extricated from this racist past.

When Arizona last conducted executions, it badly [botched four executions](#) in as many years. Arizona officials also have a [long and problematic history](#) of illegally importing lethal injection drugs from unregulated suppliers and of using drugs declared unsafe for use in executions by the [federal Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#), [federal courts](#), and the [drug manufacturers](#) themselves.

In 2020, 94 percent of the people who were executed had at least one serious impairment, and a majority had at least two impairments, including intellectual disabilities and/or brain injuries, mental illness, and histories of childhood abuse and trauma.

In recent years, we have seen Americans turn their back against the death penalty. There are now 35 states that have either formally abolished the death penalty or haven't carried out an execution in more than a decade. [Most Americans now prefer an alternative sentence](#) to a death sentence. There is broad recognition that the death penalty makes the racism and the inevitable errors of the criminal legal system permanent. Moreover, studies consistently show that the [death penalty actually makes communities less safe](#) by draining resources from programs that reduce and prevent crime, while [failing to bring about the closure](#) victims deserve.

We respectfully urge you not to stain the good name of the people of Arizona and your own legacy.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union

ACLU of Arizona

American Friends Services Committee - Arizona (AFSC-AZ)

Amnesty International USA

Arizona Attorneys for Criminal Justice (AACJ)

Arizona Inmate Families & Friends Association

Arizona Justice Alliance

Arizona Public Defender Association (APDA)

Arizonans for Transparency and Accountability in Correction (ATAC)

Central Phoenix Inez Casiano NOW

Central Arizona National Lawyers Guild

Color Of Change

Death Penalty Alternatives for Arizona

Episcopal Diocese of Arizona Prison Ministry

Justice Java

Pima County Public Defender's Office

Puente Human Rights Movement

Sonoran Prevention Works