

January 11, 2021

Acting Attorney General Jeffrey A. Rosen
U.S. Dept. of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Acting Attorney General Rosen:

We are former correction officials in the State of Indiana and we write to ask that you postpone the three execution dates set this week out of concern for the safety of correction staff, administrators, and prisoners in Indiana facilities, and our communities.

As you are likely aware, the Southern District of Indiana Court found that holding the executions increases the risk of spread of COVID-19 within the Indiana prison where the executions are held. See *Smith v. Barr*, No. 2:20-cv-630-JRS-MJD, at *15 (S.D.Ind. Jan. 7 2021) (describing “compelling evidence that the manner in which the defendants have conducted the last ten executions has created a substantial risk that the plaintiffs [prisoners at FCC Terre Haute prison] will contract COVID-19 and suffers serious health consequences.”)

As the Court found, “the executions introduce a large number of outsiders to the prison complex.” *Id.* According the Warden, the executions pull scores of staff at Terre Haute from their duties and require them to mix with between 50 and 125 out of state witnesses and staff who travel to the prison from around the country. Some of these out of state federal staff are traveling from states where the highly contagious variant of COVID-19 has been documented in the community.

At a time when corrections staff in Indiana are facing incredible pressure and stress from the dangers of working during the pandemic, holding these executions this week places an unnecessary threat to their safety. Community COVID-19 levels are already exceptionally high in Indiana, with several counties in crisis. At the same time, vaccinations have begun at FCC Terre Haute and other corrections agencies in Indiana. A short postponement could literally save hundreds of lives. We ask that you prioritize the health and safety of correction staff and postpone these executions until staff have all been offered vaccines.

Sincerely,

Doris Parlette
Retired Superintendent, Indiana Dept. of Correction

Karin Thornburg,
Former Assistant Superintendent, Indiana Dept. of
Corrections

William Kersey,
Former Corrections Program Director, Indiana Dept.
of Corrections

James Cahill,
Retired Indiana State Parole Supervisor