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The President of the United States, Joseph Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington DC 2050

**President Biden Must Commute Federal and Military Death Sentences Before it is Too Late**

Dear Mr. President:

President-Elect Trump has articulated plans to expand the number of crimes punishable by the federal death penalty. He also plans to execute all of the people remaining on Federal death row.

We should take these plans seriously, because in the final 6 months of his first term, President Trump became the most executing president since Roosevelt, with 13 executions.

I voted for President Trump in all of his campaigns, and I agree with him on most of his positions, but not the death penalty. I have written to President Trump personally to ask him to stop calling for more executions.

I speak from experience. I oversaw three electric-chair executions as warden of the Florida State Penitentiary and I shadowed five lethal injection executions in Texas as Florida transitioned to that practice.

I'm a law-and-order guy, an Air Force veteran, a pro-life Catholic and a lifelong conservative. My opposition to executions does not come from any bleeding-heart concern for those who have taken innocent lives. It comes from my first-hand knowledge that participating in executions is devastating for the government employees who do so.

Each time an execution was scheduled, I worked with my staff to manage the process in minute-by-minute detail. Despite this meticulous preparation, one execution went horribly wrong, and the prisoner's head caught fire and filled the execution chamber with smoke. Another prisoner bled profusely from his nose during the procedure, which turned out to be Florida's last electrocution. After that, I helped Florida transition to lethal injection. Unfortunately, I soon learned that while lethal injection executions may look more peaceful to the witnesses on the

other side of the glass, it is just as traumatizing for those of us whose job it is to end the prisoner's life.

The reality is that even when things go smoothly on the surface, the process of killing another human being is traumatic for those involved. If things go awry, the harm is far worse. I still have nightmares and flashbacks from my participation in executions. I also saw the damage executions caused to my staff, not only those who worked directly on execution teams but many others throughout the prison system. Some of my colleagues spoke openly about the trauma they experienced, while others remained silent. As the warden, I became well aware of the impacts: substance abuse, domestic troubles, depression, even suicide. Some left correctional work altogether.

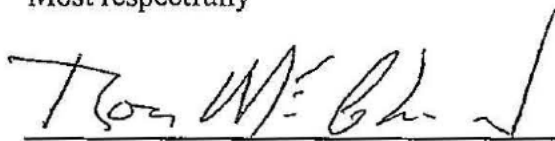
It is one thing when armed soldiers or law enforcement must use deadly force to subdue an aggressor. It is quite another thing to kill someone who is no longer a threat to others. In a properly managed prison, even the most aggressive prisoner can be held safe from harming others.

In reality, there is no good reason for our nation to resume executions. No one will be any safer because of this cruelty, but it will surely cause correctional workers to suffer lasting harm.

I know the brave men and women who work in our nation's prisons are professional, and they will do the job demanded of them. We must protect the safety and well-being of our nation's hardworking correctional staff. That means we should not expose correctional staff to the trauma of carrying out executions.

Now that Donald Trump will soon be our president again, I feel compelled to say there is one thing in particular that I agree about with President Biden. We share a strong opposition to the death penalty. President Biden has the power to show mercy through the process of executive clemency, and I urge that he do so expeditiously for everyone on the federal and military death rows.

Most respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron McAndrew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

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Ron McAndrew,

*Ron McAndrew served as the Warden of the Florida State Penitentiary from 1996 to 1998 and other Florida prisons during his tenure.. He is a founding member of the Board of Advisors of Death Penalty Action.*