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## **Child Advocates, Jurors and Victim's Widow Urge Clemency for Terry Williams, a Survivor of Child Sexual Abuse Who Killed His Abusers**

### **Unprecedented Outpouring of Support in PA by Former Prosecutors and Judges, Faith Leaders, Mental Health Professionals and Law Professors Who Join Call to Stop Execution Scheduled for October 3rd**

### **Clemency Petition Filed Today Citing Horrific Physical and Sexual Abuse Unheard by Jury That Sentenced Terry to Death**

*(Philadelphia, PA; September 6, 2012)* Today, more than two dozen child advocates joined former jurors, the victim's widow and dozens of other concerned individuals and organizations, in urging Governor Tom Corbett and the Board of Pardons to grant clemency to Terrance "Terry" Williams, who suffered years of physical and sexual abuse from older males, eventually killing two of his abusers while in his teens. Among those who are publicly calling for the death sentence to be commuted are 22 former prosecutors and judges, 34 law professors, 40 mental health professionals and over three dozen faith leaders from across Pennsylvania including the Archbishop of Philadelphia, Charles Chaput. If Terry Williams is executed on October 3, 2012, he will be the first non-volunteer put to death by the Commonwealth in 50 years.

In a [letter](#) sent to Governor Tom Corbett and the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons, child advocates noted the special impact of child sex abuse cases in Pennsylvania because of the tragic events which have come to light involving Jerry Sandusky and the Catholic church, writing, "In our Commonwealth, we have seen very public and analogous examples of this phenomenon as major institutions in Pennsylvania have come under scrutiny regarding the sexual abuse of children."

The letter from child advocates continues, "The evidence of abuse in this case is clear. There can be no doubt that Terry was repeatedly and violently abused and exploited as a child and teenager by manipulative older men. Terry's acts of violence have, alas, an explanation of the worst sort: enveloped by anger and self-hatred, Terry lashed out and killed two of the men who sexually abused him and caused him so much pain."

The letters from the child advocates and the other distinguished Pennsylvanians accompanied a [clemency petition](#) filed today with the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons and Governor Corbett by Terry's attorneys urging commutation to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The clemency petition provides details of Terry's horrific childhood of abuse and rape. Growing up in poverty and chaos, Terry was raised by a violently physically abusive single mother. First raped by an older boy when he was only six years old, Terry was later groomed by a public schoolteacher who bought him food, clothes, a bicycle and gave him rides to school and eventually began raping him.

As a teenager, Terry was the victim of two other older men. These men used their influence as a church leader and as a sports booster to get access to young boys. Terry was sexually abused and exploited by both of these men. Tragically, Terry killed both of these men when he was seventeen and eighteen years old, respectively.

The jury that convicted Terry and sentenced him to death for the murder of Amos Norwood, which occurred just three months after Terry turned eighteen, never knew all the relevant facts. Terry's attorney, who did not meet with him until the day before the trial started, did not investigate the facts of the case before trial and never told the jurors that Terry was abused throughout his childhood and was abused by the men he killed. Now, several jurors say that if they had known the whole truth about Terry's story, they would have voted for life instead of death. "If I had known that Terrance Williams had a sexual relationship with the older male victim, that definitely would have made a difference" says one of the jurors who signed an affidavit. "That would have been shocking. I certainly think he would not have been sentenced to death."

Additionally, Pennsylvania is the only state where courts are not required to instruct juries that life means life without parole in first- and second-degree murder cases. Several jurors from Terry's capital trial have stated that they did not understand this crucial point, and thought that their choice was between a death sentence or a life sentence with the possibility of parole. "If I had known that a life sentence meant life without parole, I personally would have voted for a life sentence, and I think other people would have voted for life too," one juror stated in a sworn affidavit.

Now that they have all the facts, five of the jurors from Terry's capital trial have submitted sworn affidavits expressing their support for life in prison rather than the death sentence handed down at trial.

In addition to child advocates and jurors, the victim's widow supports clemency for Terry, who is deeply remorseful. Despite losing her husband, Mrs. Norwood has forgiven Terry and expresses her support for Terry's sentence to be reduced from death to life. In Mrs. Norwood's words, "I have come to forgive Mr. Williams. It has taken me many years. I want his life spared and I do not want him executed. I am at peace with my decision and I hope and pray that my wishes are respected." (Read [affidavit](#))

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett, the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons, and Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams have the power to stop the execution and reduce Terry Williams' sentence from death to life without the possibility of parole.

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To speak with Terry's attorney, Shawn Nolan, Assistant Chief of the Capital Habeas Corpus Unit, Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, please contact Laura Burstein at [202-626-6868](tel:202-626-6868) (o) or [Laura.Burstein@squiresanders.com](mailto:Laura.Burstein@squiresanders.com) / or Tristin Aaron at 718-938-4078 or [tristinaaron@gmail.com](mailto:tristinaaron@gmail.com)

Please visit [www.terrywilliamscllemency.com](http://www.terrywilliamscllemency.com) for extensive background about the case and information about the support for clemency for Terry.