

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/news/no-executions-2015-news-time-real-reform>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Skip to main content](#)

The end of 2014 was not a good moment in Ohio's long and sordid history with the death penalty.

In the final weeks of session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 663 (HB 663), which shrouded executions in unnecessary and dangerous secrecy that could lead to yet another botched execution. The ACLU was on the front lines battling this legislation and vowed to continue the fight after it passed.

A Brief Reprieve

Even in the darkest of days, there is often an unexpected silver lining. Late Friday afternoon, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction announced that [all 2015 executions would be rescheduled to 2016](#).

No one is going to die in the death chamber this year. That is a small but important victory.

In fact, if executions do resume in 2016, it will be nearly two years to the day when Dennis McGuire was executed using an experimental drug cocktail that led to unconscionable and unconstitutional suffering during his lethal injection.

Visit our [issues page](#) for the latest information regarding Ohio's death penalty.

When Ohio botched Dennis McGuire's execution, the ACLU asked Governor Kasich to pause all executions. We did so not only because of McGuire's grotesque and gruesome death, but because the state's increasingly experimental executions were distracting the public from very important reforms proposed by a taskforce sponsored by the Ohio Supreme Court.

An Opportunity for Change

Now, with a pause on executions this year, there is a possibility that the General Assembly could consider reforms to the state's broken death penalty system. When the Ohio Senate passed HB 663, leaders promised that they would consider the taskforce's reforms in 2015. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Butler also pledged to address the recommendations in 2015.

What types of reforms could be coming to Ohio?

The taskforce has dozens of important recommendations, but near the top of the list is a ban on executing people with severe mental illnesses. Unfortunately, Ohio and all other states that still use the death penalty allow those who are profoundly mentally ill to be executed. Killing those who are sick is not justice, no matter how terrible their crime may be.

Ohio could take a step forward for once by adopting the taskforce recommendations. It is time for our state to be a leader in capital punishment reform and not a leader in botching executions, inventing new lethal injection experiments or passing increasing extreme death penalty legislation.

Stay informed

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