

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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LUCASVILLE, OH- Today, the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio filed an amicus brief claiming that prosecutors presented jury members with false evidence in the trial of Siddique Abdullah Hasan, who was accused of killing Officer Vallandingham during the 1993 Lucasville riots.

Mr Hasan was convicted and sentenced to death largely based on evidence which has now been shown to be unreliable, said Staughton Lynd, ACLU of Ohio Cooperating Counsel.

If the state presented evidence that was not true, Mr. Hasans conviction and death penalty should be immediately over-ruled, continued Lynd.

Prosecutors were eager to convict Hasan because they viewed him as the leader of the 11-day rebellion, the ACLU of Ohio argues in its brief. The actual killer of hostage Officer Vallandingham was a less prominent prisoner who turned informant for the State named Anthony Lavelle. The amicus brief summarizes the testimony of fourteen different prisoners who witnessed Lavelle recruit a death squad, discuss why an officer should be killed, enter the area where the officer was confined to do the killing, and boast of the killing afterwards.

To support the false conviction of Hasan, according to the brief, prosecutors then recruited a prisoner named Kenneth Law to present perjured testimony. They threatened Law with trial for murder if he did not say what the State wanted. When Law told prosecutors that the murderer was Lavelle, Law said they responded that his story would have to change, because Lavelle was a state witness.

The death penalty is a horrible practice, but if the state insists on imposing it, they should be sure that the person is guilty, concluded Lynd. There is considerable evidence Mr. Hasan is innocent and because of his death sentence it is even more imperative the state drops this wrongful conviction.

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