

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-criticizes-state-refusing-review-failed-execution>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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CLEVELAND - Today, the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio blasted state officials for neglecting to perform a review of the failed September 15 execution of Romell Broom. Following the botched execution attempt, the ACLU launched an investigation into the incident by asking the state for video recordings of the procedures, subsequent reports reviewing the failed execution and any changes to protocols that the state enacted to prepare for Mr. Broom's rescheduled execution date of September 22. The state admitted to having none of these documents.

The death penalty is the most severe punishment that can be given by our criminal justice system and there is no room for error. Once again, the state of Ohio has shown that it is simply not competent to carry out this process through its lack of transparency and accountability to the public, said ACLU of Ohio Staff Counsel Carrie Davis.

After three executions plagued by problems, the state continues to blindly deny that the process can be improved. If no one in the state is reviewing even the most botched procedures, what hope is there that it will not occur again? Governor Strickland must intervene before another execution ends in disaster, added Davis.

In the past, the state has been hesitant to provide information to the public about the execution process. Advocates have argued for years for greater access to information about preparations, events and personnel involved with the process. Following a lawsuit by the ACLU of Ohio, officials installed closed circuit cameras so witnesses could observe the team locate veins before the condemned entered the death chamber. However, this recent investigation shows that the state does not record this footage for later review.

The next execution scheduled is Lawrence Reynolds on October 8. Attorneys for Reynolds have asked courts to delay the execution, while the state has asked for permission to proceed.

Davis concluded, Mr. Broom's failed execution is unprecedented in the history of lethal injection, yet the state has not even performed the most cursory of review. With another possible execution on the horizon next week, it is unconscionable for the state to even consider going forward. Governor Strickland must halt all executions now, and work with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections and other officials to create safeguards that ensure executions are routinely reviewed and the public is kept informed on the process.

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