

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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LUCASVILLE, OH- Today, the State of Ohio executed Joseph L. Clark after a lengthy delay resulting from a collapsed vein. Clark was scheduled to be executed at 10 a.m. Tuesday morning. Reports show that the execution began without incident, but a series of complications arose.

While it is clear officials were experiencing a great deal of problems injecting the drugs into Mr. Clark, the public does not know what happened after the officials chose to close the curtain, said Carrie Davis, Staff Counsel with the ACLU of Ohio.

Currently pending in federal court, the ACLU of Ohios case Apanovich v. Wilkinson challenges the States refusal to allow the public to watch the intubation phase of the execution where catheters are inserted into the veins of the condemned. The case was filed in U.S. District Court in Columbus and the plaintiff is Anthony Apanovich, a death row inmate in Mansfield.

The ability of the public and members of the media to view all aspects of executions is crucial to encourage thoughtful and informed debate on the death penalty in Ohio. By not allowing public viewing of the executions, the State is diminishing the power of people to understand the execution process and the possible problems that may arise. added Davis.

Early reports indicate that as officials began injecting fluids into Clark that would ultimately kill him, his vein collapsed. After several attempts to locate a new vein, Clark sat up on the table and exclaimed, Its not working, prompting officials to close the curtains surrounding the area so that family members and the press could not view the proceedings.

Spokespeople for the state claim the Mr. Clark experienced no further pain, but reports from the Toledo Blade claim witnesses could hear Clarke moaning and groaning from behind the curtain.

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