

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-launches-investigation-newton-execution>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Skip to main content](#)

COLUMBUS- Today, the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio announced that it would investigate the execution procedures implemented by the state and the events surrounding the execution of Christopher Newton one week ago. The ACLU of Ohio was joined by Ohioans to Stop Executions and Jonathan I. Groner MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery at Ohio State University who also called on the state to release information on the execution and to end the death penalty in Ohio immediately.

Despite spending six times the normal amount of time to kill someone by lethal injection and the fact that Newton was seen moving and heaving even after the paralytic was administered, the state is ignoring the facts and claiming that the Newton execution was not botched, said ACLU of Ohio Legal Director Jeffrey Gamso. It is imperative that the prisons practices and procedures are thoroughly examined and Ohio immediately halts executions in order to review the death penalty.

In its records request, sent to Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ORDC) Director Terry Collins, Southern Ohio Correctional Facility Warden Edwin C. Voorhies, Jr. and Governor Ted Strickland, the ACLU of Ohio asked for the execution log, videotapes or logs of the intubation phase of the execution, a copy of the ORDCs practices and procedures for executions and a list of all ORDC personnel who oversaw Newtons execution. The ACLU of Ohio also requested a copy of Newtons pre-execution medical evaluation and any autopsy records.

This marks the second Ohio execution that has been plagued with problems. On May 2, 2006, Ohio executed Joseph L. Clark after a lengthy delay resulting from a collapsed vein.

Ohio is one of several states with litigation challenging lethal injection as cruel and inhumane, yet remains the only state with such a challenge still actively executing death row inmates.

Something went terribly wrong during Mr. Newtons execution. Ohio must take a serious look at its death penalty system and make several changes if they are to avoid future problems during executions. The best way to guarantee no further execution is botched is to put a halt to them now, Gamso concluded.

Stay informed

2022 ACLU of Ohio