



# On Wings of Hope

Volume 27 Issue 3

July - Sept. 2023

**Execute  
Justice  
Not  
People**

## "ALABAMA FIRST IN EVERYTHING BAD"

Words spoken to me when I first arrived in Alabama 24 years ago by a white politician and once more I say to myself that she knew what she was talking about! And here we are once more full of pride because we will be the first state to use the gas chamber! Wait a minute! Did you say the gas chamber? I thought gas chambers were rightfully condemned by the world after the horrors of the concentration camps in Nazi Germany?

Well, apparently I was wrong on that when it comes to this state which insults Christianity by calling itself a Christian state and whose leader mouths such platitudes as "All lives are sacred." And although, fortunately there are people of faith in this state who don't believe in an eye for an eye they are not in leadership roles and therefore do not reflect the beliefs of the majority.

Does the majority really believe that it is fine to torture individuals for hours leaving them severely wounded physically and traumatized only to try to kill them all over again at a later date with an untried method? Surely Alabamians you can do better than that!

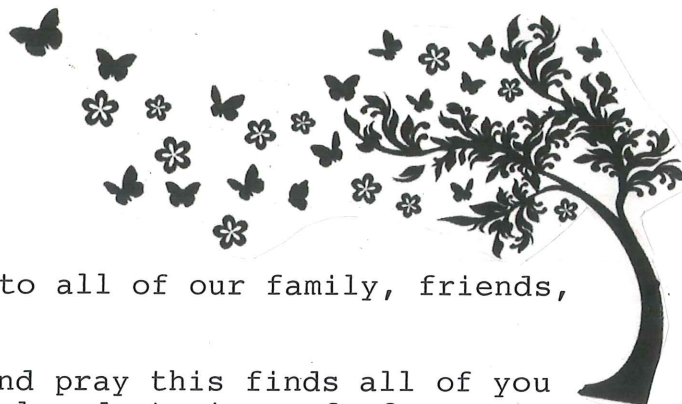
Well, okay, maybe you don't care about the condemned but how about the risk that the execution staff will run? Does that matter or do you answer that it is their choice, and you are correct in that, but still is he not your "neighbor" who you are told to love as yourself?

Seeing that we are talking religion, what about the condemned's right to have his spiritual advisor present? I see you have an answer for that too because certainly with the electric chair, and I witnessed an execution in the electric chair behind glass, there was no one in the room with Brian Baldwin when he was executed.

Yes, you have answers for everything just like the mob so long ago who screamed "crucify him" but I do have one final question to you: "Do you really want that your state is "first in everything bad and last in everything good?" I know you can do better than that and that you are better than that so please stand up and shout "No, not in my name" to your misguided leaders!

Esther

*Execute  
Justice  
Not  
People*



**PROJECT HOPE TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY (phadp)**  
501 (C) (3) non- profit.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

Working together with friends, supporters and other advocates to educate the public and bring about the abolition of Capital Punishment in Alabama.

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**THIS NEWSLETTER WAS WRITTEN,  
TYPED AND FORMATTED ON DEATH  
ROW AT HOLMAN PRISON**

Greetings to all of our family, friends,  
and allies

I hope and pray this finds all of you keeping cool and staying safe from extreme heat. So much to talk about, but so little space. Where to begin? Let's start with my thanks to all of you loving, caring, thoughtful, and supportive people in my life. I would like to say on behalf of my family and myself "thank you-thank you-thank you for the thoughts, prayers, and support when my dad passed in June!" All of your thoughtfulness, strength, prayers, and support truly means a lot to me, and has helped me push through. Thank you!

Now, we are sad to say that the state of Alabama murdered our friend and brother James Barber, but in the same breath we have to rejoice in his homecoming, because he was at peace then and he'll remain eternally at peace. While his murderers, put plain and simple, lost. The man facing death forgave his murderers, when they couldn't forgive. Which was more in line with being a good Christian, in this good Christian state?

We would like to thank Sarah Gregory, who forgave James Barber, and stood with him throughout the years, as well as to the very end. That's what true reconciliation and closure looks like. Sarah has joined our Board of Advisors. Thank you Sarah, we are honored and you honor "Jimi" Keep fighting!

The state of Alabama has now asked permission to set two more murder human being dates. Casey McWhorter (lethal injection) and Kenneth Smith (nitrogen hypoxia). We are saddened and disappointed, but we stand ready to fight with and for our brothers.

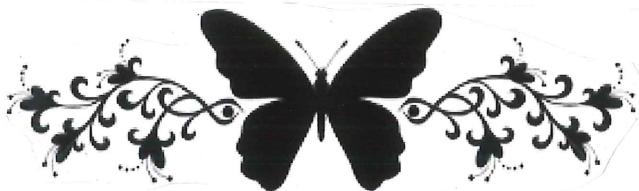
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It's 2023! No really, it's 2-0-2-3!! Although technology has progressed greatly, the mindset and radical racial temperament in this country remains the same. Those in power in this country are racially motivated, and politically driven, as they know they can push their racial divide and hatred agenda under the guise of "serving the people." How can a politician stand at a podium in this day and age, and proclaim proudly that a race of people who were kidnapped from their country, shackled and chained, beaten, terrorized, raped, castrated, murdered, and forced into servitude benefitted from being slaves, and not fear political backlash?? I'll tell you how. They're surrounded by like-minded politicians, and they're voted for by like-minded citizens, and they're confident that those who oppose their racial rhetoric, voters will not show up at the polls to make them regret such statements. We have to prove them wrong!! It's 2-0-2-3, and it's long past time for change. We have to bridge the divide, we have to stop state sanctioned murders, we have to start a movement to put more progressive people in power, and remove the regressive thinking people. We have to become more proactive and not just reactive! Let's take the fight to the radically motivated oppressors. As Barber showed us, "They can't win!"

In Solidarity,

Anthony Boyd  
Chairman, PHADP



What Is Just?

Just means: Honorable and fair in one's dealings and actions. A death sentence is it just? You could call it an eye for an eye, but when a man or woman is convicted of murder he or she is sentenced to do time. Murder is murder. A DA gets to decide if he wants to make it a death penalty case or not. He can make it be what he wants it to be. He is not just when it comes to picking a jury. You can get 12 people who have no idea about the law. So can one way that it was just when it came to a trial? Trial means Examination of evidence and applicable law by a competent tribunal to determine the issue of a specified charge or claim. A DA is supposed to be honorable and fair. In most cases that is not the case. All he cares about is winning. How can you say a man is just when he doesn't mind to stretch the truth. If you look at a trial, most are never just.

Brandon Sykes

Alabama News

Third Quarter 2023

\* July 21, 2023 at 1:38 am lethal drugs began to flow into the veins of James Barber. While that may have been a crucial moment in his life, it was not the one that will be remembered. The time he spent getting to know God, his brothers at Donaldson and later at Holman, his cherished friend Sarah Gregory, and countless others who were blessed to share this life with him will be his lasting legacy. I don't think that was his plan, and even if it was, I don't think you can plan things like that, you just live your life how God leads you and trust in His plan for your legacy. We've already learned so much from Jimi's life and walk, I know we will continue to, if we search our hearts for any animosity and turn that into forgiveness.

\* The family and estate of Joe Nathan James Jr. who was tortured to death at the hands of the state of Alabama has filed a lawsuit over the violations of Mr. James's rights during his botched execution.

\* Thanks to our Advisory Board Member Dr. Katie Owens-Murphy as well as all the talented artists in here and on the outside who are developing a traveling art exhibit to highlight so many of the inconsistencies of capital punishment.

\* We also want to thank Advisory Board Member Rev. Tom Duley, who will be giving a talk at the Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Center in Birmingham on Sept. 21 as a part of their "efforts at community engagement on societal issues that reflect our Buddhist philosophy!" We are grateful for the opportunity to educate the public about the death penalty.

\* Advisory Board Member Brandon Fountain has done an incredible job making sure all of our existing content remains available as our website has been redesigned and moved to a new host. Thank you Brandon!

\* Executive Director Esther Brown has really stepped up her efforts in coordinating with all of our allies, both in Alabama and across the country, she continues to chair the Death Penalty Moratorium Committee for the NAACP. She represents us so well on the bi-weekly Alabama People of Faith Death Penalty Coalition meetings, as well as execution vigils with Death Penalty Action. She has also coordinated our participation in the Alabama Arise annual meeting later this month, Thank you Esther for always answering the call as only Esther can!



The Price of Justice

"I \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as \_\_\_\_\_ according to the best of my abilities and understanding agreeably to the Constitution and laws of the United States. So help me God." Yes, help us God! This was the original oath taken by individuals appointed to the United States Supreme Court before it was changed in December of 1990 by the Judicial Improvements Act of 1990, which replaced the phrase "according to the best of my abilities and understanding agreeably to the Constitution" with "under the Constitution."

These judges place their hands upon a Holy Bible and recite this oath. With the intention of administering justice. So what happens from the time of taking the oath to the time when they place their butts in the chairs. Here;s what I think takes place, first off they probably had their fingers crossed when they recite the oath, so in their hearts they're not doing anything wrong. Perhaps they never had any intentions of upholding the laws of the Constitution.

Due to the recent ethical issues at the Supreme Court, this past July, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted on legislation that would impose ethics rule on the Supreme Court. What, why weren't there any ethics rules already in place to guarantee the Justice Clarence Thomas have been accepting gifts and luxury travel from GOP megadonor Harlan Crow for years without disclosing it as federal law requires. Crow reportedly purchased Georgia real estate from Thomas in 2014, including the home where the Justice's mother still lives and paid for Thomas' grand-nephew's private school tuition. I believe you don't receive all of that for nothing, what do you think Crow was buying?

The position of power these justices have been given has given them the sense of being untouchable, first they're there for life, no one is in place to check their actions and behavior. That power has corrupted the minds of a few of the Justices in the Conservative super-majority that now they can rule and make decisions without even giving any explanations for the ruling. The "do as I say, not as I do" mentality has no place in the Judicial system in the United States!

Jeffery Lee  
Sec/Treasurer  
Z-674 / L-12



Untitled

What would the U.S. Supreme Court look like if it was not a part of the American political system? Yeahhhh, I know it's "NOT," but at the same time, IT REALLY IS. To think otherwise would be naive. Presidents select and nominate judges (candidates) for the U.S. Supreme Court who are more favorable to their political party, and their political party's agenda. All judges nominated for the Supreme Court should be independent. If not all nine of the justices, at least five out of the nine should be independent. When I say "independent," I mean in the sense that they would be independent of both Republican and Democratic parties.

When you nominate judges from a two-party system, over time, one party can and will eventually highjack the highest judicial tribunal in the United States. Turning justice into no thana farce, as it targets political agendas of its fellow party members to feed into the constitutional erosion machine. Take a very good look at the politically stacked Supreme Court as it sits right now and you'll see the erosion of what used to be a democracy!

A Supreme Court where most of the judges are from one political party will never represent the whole of society that it sits in judgement of. There can be no will of the people when the highest court in the land is not guided by the constitution, TRUE JUSTICE, but rather by political agendas and personal feelings! Can you even respect an opinion from said court? Well, you could if you're willing to just allow naiveté to run rampant, or if you're on the winning side of the numbers sitting on said court.

We the people... should expect more, and demand more than to be disrespected in our faces with a blatant disregard to the actual constitutional protections "supposedly" afforded EVERY man, woman, and child, no matter race, creed, or political affiliation.

No ones line should hang in the balance based on votes from human beings appointed by human beings who only want to further their political agend. In a dictatorship, maybe, but in a democracy... that's just ludicrous!

"A system that will take life must first give Justice"

John J. Curtin, Jr.

Be the Other Voice,  
Phillips and Boyd



### The Night

Well this had to have been the most quietest execution in history. In the middle of the night with almost everybody asleep, trying to see how this new extra 6 hour extension would work.

Well it was just more torture because in the past, midnight would have ended things, but the extra 6 hours meant they could wait til 2 AM to commit their execution plans. In the past, we would have been banging in support of our friend that was looking forward to be with Jesus. That is the best way to explain his mood and how to show us/ the world how to keep his head up under the circumstances.

He spent his final hours having his lawyer read the Bible to him for hours. He even was telling jokes with the IV team that was helping the state execute him. How could this be, truly? Jimi had always been the same way, trying to ease the stress of the situation with some kind of joke. As he fought for us because he was tired and was ready to be with his Lord. One of the last moments he told me was that when he gets where he's going, he would leave the light on. I had thought he was crazy for saying that because it was like he had gave up, but in reality he was the light in his actions as he dealt with the things. The light he showed us was unheard of, and as I sat up and prayed hoping this cup would pass over him.

Now the torture part in this new protocol situation is they don't have to rush and they can take their time as a man sits around waiting for them to start. These extra 6 hrs is more mental torture than anything and the thought that goes thru his head as he sits in that room alone those last few hours. Hopefully his spiritual advisor was there with him, but I doubt that cause he was listening to his lawyer read his favorite books of the Bible to him.

We can only hope that nothing went wrong behind the curtains, but he wouldn't have said anything and the most powerful thing he did, to me, was give forgiveness as his last deed on this Earth.

I hope my friend has a safe journey home to be reunited with his mother and loved ones in heaven.

Dee



Friendly reminder, there are many events that happen here on life row that do not make it into our newsletter. Some of these may be effecting you or a loved one directly, and could possibly be the most important thing going on here. But because the scope of our newlester is limited to death penalty abolition, your problem or issue may not be mentioned. This doesn't mean that we, individually, or as a group aren't concerned. It just means that "On Wings of Hope" isn't the proper place to address certain issues.

# A Christian Perspective

Produced By  
Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty



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Greetings Friends and Family,

Life has really given us some lemons lately, with the loss of our brother Jimi Barber, an execution date has been requested for Casey McWhorter, who was a teenager at the time of his crime, a second execution date has been sought for Kenny Smith, via an untested method of nitrogen asphyxiation. Kenny, who never actually killed anyone, but was involved in a murder-for-hire plot by a pastor (who committed suicide to avoid prosecution) who wanted his wife killed now faces a second round of cruelty at the hands of the state. Alan Miller will face the experimentation of the nitrogen mask as well, because the courts are apparently sick enough to allow guys to be executed twice.

Well, y'all know I love to share recipes, especially when they're from the Holy Scriptures, I mean, where better to fill yourself than the bread of life. So I found this method for turning these particular lemons into lemonade in Isaiah 57:1

The righteous perishes and no man  
takes it to heart;  
Merciful men are taken away,  
While no one considers  
That the righteous is taken away from  
evil.

I know that Kenny was ready to be taken away from evil last Nov., to enter into peace. And I know Jimi is already there.

I thank God for always being with us, and for handing down His most precious recipes generation after generation. Keeping us connected to Him via His word, so that the weight of this life is never too heavy, because we are not left to lift it alone.

Yours in Christ,

Bart Johnson  
Vice-Chairman, PHADP

God  
is  
Love



## Jimi Barber' Message to his Friends at Holman

My hope lies in the promises of my Creator, who is always faithful.

He is hope.

He has brought back into my life some of the people my actions hurt most-- truly a miracle. He created a new thing not only for them but for me. Out of great tragedy came also great blessings for them and myself.

We have had the privilege of experiencing one of the most powerful spiritual forces in the universe: forgiveness.

I did not deserve it. I could not earn it. But I could not and will not ever take it for granted. Our lives have been changed in many wonderful and very miraculous ways.

I hope everyone who hears this will address any unforgiveness they harbor and give it to the Creator who is constantly creating new things for us and in us.

God bless you all and keep you

In Christ

James Barber

\* John Ward passed away on Aug. 30th after a lengthy battle with cancer. Leah Nelson from Alabama Applesseed, who worked for years on his case was familiar with John and had these words to say "he was a man who din't kill his son, a man who never killed anyone, and a man who died because of cowardice and delay." Thank you Leah, for your kind and true words and for continuing to fight!

IN MEMORIAM

### All Eyes On You

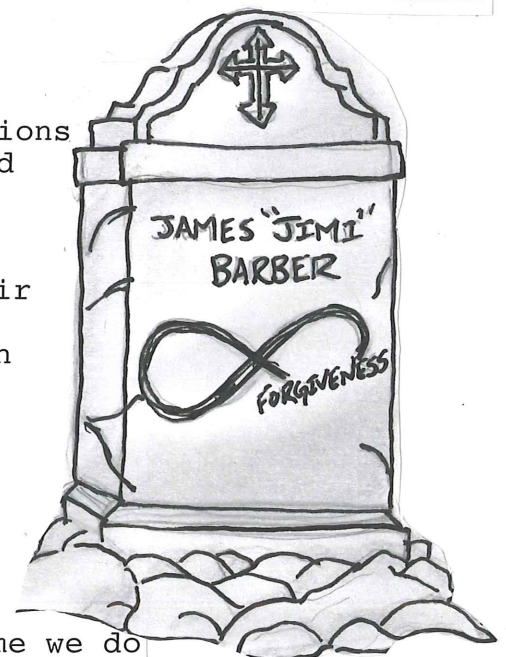
Change comes with trial and hardships  
Moments happened to cause positive realizations  
Ask yourself, are you comfortable, satisfied  
No, don't be, strive to be qualified

Like a hat thrown in the air  
A call to the masses to correct what's unfair  
Modern times of rejecting resolution  
Now we must galvanize and embrace revolution

Like a shot in the arm  
A body no longer warm  
Or the opposite and not conform  
Adrenaline to push out to vote as bee swarm

Choices to be made are presently clear  
The time to overcome and correct so near  
Location, a booth, a polling place, it's time we do  
All Eyes On You

M. Williams



## The Powers That Be (Bigotry)

I was asked the following questions: If the laws that govern the United States of America are based on God's law. #1 How do executions fit with God's law? #2 Are executions a part of God's law? #3 Where or when did God say man could execute each other? #4 In God's law, who is allowed to kill?

First of all, the United States formed their own government in 1787, with the writing of the Constitution, which established a federal republic, then came the ten amendments to the Constitution called the bill of rights in 1791.

The laws that govern the United States of America were always designed to favor the wealthy, intelligent majority, and to oppress the poor, uneducated minorities (African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans).

The United States was built on hatred and bigotry toward the poor, uneducated minorities and we see complete examples of this bigotry with the Emancipation Proclamation order given by President Lincoln on Sept. 23, 1862 and during the reconstruction of the states after the Civil War that took place from 1867 until 1877.

Even unto this day, Alabama is one of those southern states that still don't want to be a part of the Union. And Alabama lawmakers still march to their own beat, especially when it comes to executions and setting the innocent free.

God's law was given to the children of Israel by the prophet Moses, but grace and truth has come unto all mankind by Christ Jesus. He is the end of the law for right standing with God.

Jesus taught that the old covenant with His people was passing away and a new covenant was being established. No more eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, or life for life.

A good example of Jesus teaching on this subject is in the beatitudes, you have heard it said of old, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. That you may be sons and daughters of your Father in heaven, for He makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Jesus said agree with your adversary quickly, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge- the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. This quote is from St. Matthew 5:25, not one time did Jesus say anything about being executed.

Those who forget their past are subject to repeat it again, and again, and again. I laugh at those who say we should forget the past and move on. How can we? When there are so many reminders in the laws, in cities, parks, and even the courthouses have statues of the past abuse and oppression that gave birth to generational trauma and now this great nation with its man-made laws don't know how to care for that which it has given birth to with all its generational

trauma. A good start would be to do the right, just, and fair thing when it is presented to you or myself.

Except the Lord God builds the house they labor in vain.

Earl J. McGahee Sr.

Z - 466 / L - 24



Speak King

Martin Luther King Jr., King David, and now my dear brother James Barber are still speaking to us all, even through their death. Matthew 10:28 says don't fear them which kill the body, James didn't allow the hate of this state to put fear in showing others the powerful love of Jesus, with his family and others that encountered him in his last days. See the state of Alabama wanted people to see an angry man, to justify their ugly sin of murder, but my brother had his cup running over and Jesus prepared a table in front of his enemy, where he praised the true One in control, Jesus, Speak King. He spoke to us all on how to be redeemed by forgiveness, of someone he hurt. State of Alabama, you lost, because you meant for evil, but Jesus turned it around for good. Speak King. We Never Forget.



The new Amisted  
A new beginning  
A new awakening  
A new time and reason to come together  
A new call for solidarity in the wake of a former elected official

Making America great is not to repeat sins of her past  
Making America great is to make changes for better that will last  
Making America great is not to hide her past shame  
Making America great is in the how we learn from her past and change

This new call to the voting booths  
As we were called for in 2008 and for our elders in their youth  
Public ignorance and ignoring the obvious is no longer acceptable  
Public knowledge and need to not accept the division is unavoidable

Wake up, no time for sleeping, be that rebel  
Votes matter, your righ on every level  
The reason is now to change to the sod  
Be that Fighter, the new Amistad.

M. Williams

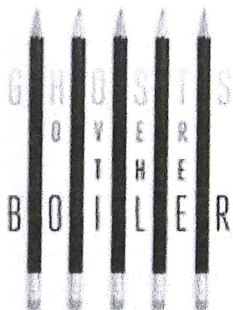
Thank You Yah

Thank you all for the roles you played in my journey as I passed through this valley of death. Thank you all for being a willing vessel of Yah, beginning with Anthony Tyson who took time out of his day to help enhance my comprehension in the law and spirituality. Nathan Woods, for stopping by the cell and dialoguing with me and for drawing a to the limit store for when I was financially distressed. Thank you Craig Newton for taking time out to dialogue with me about the peace of Islam. Thank you Derrick Mason for stopping by and enhancing my conscious mind and giving me extra breakfast trays when I was hungry. Thank you Leroy Wright for the late night meals he gave me so that I could make it through long nights and for the long johns and sweatsuits to keep me warm during the cold nights. Thank you Ulyses Snead for helping me with the fantasy league leading me to victory, so that I can have food and hygiene products in the cell. Thank you Anthony Hinton for the extra chicken trays when you had an overflow. Thank you Willie Smith for being a friend. Thank you Jimmy Davis for the hot sauce when I needed flavor to put on my food. Thank you Jason Sharp and Jeremy Jones for giving me five dollars a month for my morning breakfast milk until I got on my feet. Thank you Artez for helping me with building my law library in the cell. Thank you big Gene for the nuggets imputed. Thank you Torrey T. McNabb for imputing to me the accurate knowledge of self, accurate identity of self, the growth and development of self. Thank you Robert Ingram for getting me out to the law library. Thank you Anthony Boyd for the debates that brought about wisdom to operate in. Thank you John Hardy for the history lessons of law and self. Thank you Rock Steady for being you. Thank you Wen for the conscious dialogues. To those who are not mentioned, know you were also significant in this journey.

Soldier Solid  
Randy "The Great" Lewis



We are grateful to all who went before, to all who contributed and to all who made it happen!



*Voices from Alabama's Death Row*

PROJECT HOPE TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY  
OFFICE OF AUSTIN OWENS HARRIS

VANDERBILTUNIVERSITYPRESS.COM

**Ghosts Over the Boiler – Vanderbilt University Press**

From a donated typewriter that frequently breaks down, people on Alabama's death row have literally cut and pasted together a newsletter, *On Wings of Hope*

"Due Process Under Law"

\*WARNING\*

Alabama Politicians I have a question for you? Do you remember the story of when Jesus healed the blind? Well, let me tell you some truths of this story through a different lens. The once blind can all of a sudden begin to see, how do I know, because I was once blind. Another story of your Biblical History I would like to point out, do you remember when Jesus raised the dead to life? So allow me to tell you some more truths, I was also once dead also! Both of these stories apply to me because I was spiritually and mentally blind during trial. Both of these stories apply to me because I was spiritually and mentally dead. Now that Allah has given me vision I am not blind! Now that Allah has given me life I am not dead. One of these miracles apply here.

I see how you tricked me to prison and murdered my character! I never had no defense counsel, everyone present worked for the court, the court works for the state, the state is a body of racist Klan members. Defendants who can not afford a lawyer ALWAYS GO TO TRIAL WITH NO LAWYER! Show me where a court-appointed attorney can be both on my side and the court side while being hired by the court! You cannot because it's impossible! Fair trials in Alabama are non-existent under a court appointed counsel. Alabama under strict review you can not get around these facts but you can get you a Public Defenders office who does not work for judges. Ever since John B. Knox and Everett O'Neal you have been menacing the negro. Now is the time to stop, we fed up!!

Jovon Gaston

Z - 802 / M - 9

## HOW TO HAVE A SAY

While Facebook groups and online petitions can generate buzz about an issue, nothing works better than contacting lawmakers personally. Email is often easy to ignore (just look at the junk in your own inbox), and some activists say a phone call works better.

Lawmakers often hold public hearings on bills, in which anyone can come to speak if they're willing to drive to Montgomery and sign up as a speaker. To find committee meetings with public hearings, go to <http://www.legislature.state.al.us> and click on "meetings and announcements."



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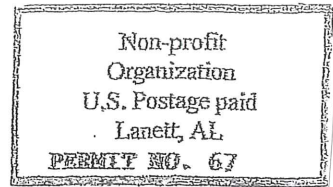
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**Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty is an interfaith 501 C 3 organization whose mission is to educate and mobilize communities to act to abolish the death penalty in Alabama. PHADP relies on YOU for support. Suggested donations: \$25/individual, \$40/household, and \$100/congregation, or whatever amount is affordable. Checks should be made out to "PHADP" and sent to the above address. Donations may also be made by going to our website and clicking on "donate".**



*Project Hope to Abolish  
the Death Penalty*

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Black Lives Matter / All Lives Matter

In the day of "Black Lives Matter" & "All lives Matter," I would have to say NO! to both organizations.

You see, "Black Lives Do Not Matter" and "All Lives Do Not Matter" the name of each of these organizations should be "Some Lives Matter."

To the men and women convicted and sentenced to "death," I am sure that their lives matter to them. If not to them, then to their loved ones and friends. To the victims of each man or woman on death row, both legal and wrongful, I am sure that their lives mattered to them. If not to them then to their loved ones and friends.

We as a nation cannot and will not heal until "All Lives Matter." Regardless of color, religion, nationality, sentence, or affiliation, "All Lives Matter" not just "Some Lives Matter".

James A. Johnson  
P-10

