



## Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty

P.O. Box 55196, Atlanta, GA 30308 [www.GFADP.org](http://www.GFADP.org)  
[GFADP@yahoo.com](mailto:GFADP@yahoo.com)

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**Media Contact:** Kathryn Hamoudah 404-688-1202 or 404-819-4233, [khamoudah@schr.org](mailto:khamoudah@schr.org)

### **Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles Denies Clemency for Warren Hill Despite Undisputed IQ of 70 and Support from Victim's Family**

#### **Strictest Law in U.S. Clears Way for Execution of Man with Intellectual Disability**

**ATLANTA – Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GFADP)** is deeply disappointed by the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles' decision not to grant clemency to Warren Hill, a man with an undisputed IQ of 70. Wednesday night, July 18, opponents of the death penalty will observe eleven vigils across Georgia as the state plans to execute Warren Hill by lethal injection at 7pm. The execution of Mr. Hill marks Georgia's first execution since the state took the life of Troy Anthony Davis despite ample evidence of his innocence. It comes on the heels of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Furman v Georgia*, in which the United States Supreme Court halted executions nationwide when it reversed three death sentences, two rendered in Georgia and one in Texas. The prevailing reason was simple: the arbitrary, wanton and freakish imposition of the ultimate penalty constituted cruel and unusual punishment that is proscribed by the Eighth Amendment.

Several jurors who sat on Mr. Hill's original jury have since stated under oath that they would have sentenced him to life without the possibility of parole had that been an option at the time of his 1991 trial. They believe life without parole is the appropriate sentence for Mr. Hill given the ample evidence of his intellectual disability.

A Georgia state court judge, convinced by the evidence, found Mr. Hill to be "mentally retarded" by a preponderance of the evidence in 2002, the same year the United States Supreme Court banned the execution of those with intellectual disability because their unique disability places them at "special risk of wrongful execution." *Atkins v. Virginia*, 536 U.S. 304 (2002). However, Mr. Hill still faces execution solely because Georgia is the only state in the country to impose the law's heaviest burden of proof, "*beyond a reasonable doubt*," on defendants seeking to prove that they have an intellectual disability and are thus ineligible for execution.

Mr. Handspike a representative for the family has said, "his family feels strongly that persons with any kind of significant mental disabilities should not be put to death. ... We do not want Mr. Hill to be executed and we believe a sentence of life without the possibility of parole is an appropriate and just resolution of this case."

"It is clear that Georgia's law is severely restrictive and fails to protect those for which it was created," said

Kathryn Hamoudah, Chair of GFADP. “It is unconscionable that Georgia would proceed with the execution of Warren Hill.”

### **Vigil Locations and Schedule**

**Jackson:** Georgia’s Death Row, 6:30pm, contact: Joseph Shippen, 404-401-9377

**Atlanta:** State Capitol on the Washington St. side, 6:30pm contact: Peggy Hendrix, 404-771-8940

**Americus:** US Post Office Prince St. & Forsyth St. Americus, GA 12:00 pm Contact: Elizabeth Dede 229-591-0114

**Athens:** UGA Arch on E. Broad St., 6:30pm-7:15pm contact: Robbie Buller, 706-783-5131, jupileep@igc.org

**Augusta:** Public Library, 902 Greene St., 6:30pm Pat Seaborn, 706-860-2721

**Clarksville:** Clarksville Courthouse, 6:30pm, contact: Helen O'Brien, (h) 706-754-2508

**Columbus:** Consolidated Government Center 100 10th St. Columbus, GA 31901 6:00pm

**Conyers:** Rockdale County Courthouse (Milstead Ave. side) 922 Court St. Conyers, GA 6:30pm contact: Barbara Lee 770-483-2648

**Macon:** Macon City Hall, 6:30pm contact: Mary Palmer Legare 478-320-0117

**Marietta:** Cobb County Courthouse, Cherokee St./Roswell St., 6:30pm contact: Brian and Debbie Freel, 404-641-7719

**Savannah:** Savannah City Hall 2 East Bay St. Savannah, GA 31402, 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM

*Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty is the statewide coalition of concerned organizations and individuals working for greater fairness in Georgia's criminal justice system and an end to capital punishment.*