

STATEMENT BY CHRISTA PIKE'S ATTORNEYS ON GOVERNOR LEE'S CLEMENCY PETITION DENIAL

Statement from Stephen Ferrell, Federal Defenders Office of Eastern Tennessee, and Kelly Gleason and Randy Spivey, Tennessee Office of the Post Conviction Defender, attorneys for Christa Pike

September 28, 2026 - "We are deeply saddened and heartbroken by Governor Lee's decision to deny clemency for Christa Pike. Moving ahead with her execution puts the State of Tennessee on singular footing: Christa will be the first person Tennessee executes in the modern death penalty era who was a teenager at the time of the offense and the first woman executed by the state in more than 200 years.

Throughout her childhood, Christa was failed by people and institutions that should have shown her care and meaningful intervention. Instead, her childhood was marked by repeated, documented rape and sexual abuse, neglect, and violence.

The 18-year-old girl suffering from severe mental illness and near-debilitating trauma no longer exists. Christa is a 50-year-old remorseful woman who understands her actions, receives proper treatment for her mental illness, and provides for and guides fellow incarcerated women.

With this decision, the State of Tennessee is ignoring what both science and our legal system have decided: an 18-year-old brain is not an adult brain, and 18 is too young to face execution. This decision also leaves unanswered vital questions about Tennessee's execution protocol.

We will continue to support Christa through every remaining avenue and advocate for a system that is transparent for the people of Tennessee."

More information at www.mercyforchrista.org