

STATEMENT FROM THE ATTORNEYS FOR CHRISTA PIKE FOLLOWING THE TENNESSEE SUPREME COURT'S RULING DENYING THE PETITION TO STAY HER EXECUTION

NASHVILLE, TN - *Statement from Stephen Ferrell, Federal Defenders Office of Eastern Tennessee, and Kelly Gleason, Tennessee Office of the Post Conviction Defender, attorneys for Christa Pike*

"We are deeply disappointed in the Tennessee Supreme Court's decision, but we will press forward, seeking relief from the U.S. Supreme Court while also continuing our request that Governor Lee grant Christa clemency. Christa is scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on Wednesday, September 30.

Christa was just 18 years old at the time of the crime, had endured a childhood of horrific rape, sexual and physical abuse, suffered from serious undiagnosed mental illness, and was sentenced before we understood what we know today about adolescent brain development and the profound effects of childhood trauma.

Even the State was prepared before Christa's 1996 trial to resolve this case with a sentence of life without parole. It is deeply troubling that 18-year-old Christa, suffering from untreated mental illness and unable to comprehend the consequences that lay ahead, was not counseled by her attorneys at the time to accept that offer. Today, 30 years later, Christa is a stable, deeply remorseful woman who understands the terrible harm caused by her actions.

Now that he is equipped with information and understanding the jury never had, Governor Lee can consider the totality of Christa's life and circumstances and right these wrongs by commuting her death sentence to life without parole. We remain hopeful that he will."

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