



RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 420

EFFECTIVE October 27, 2024

WHEREAS, The State of Missouri executed Marcellus Williams on September 24, 2024, despite credible evidence of his innocence, including exculpatory DNA evidence that was not present on the murder weapon used in the crime for which he was convicted; and

WHEREAS, Marcellus Williams's conviction was largely based on the testimony of two incentivized witnesses, one of whom was a jailhouse informant with a history of dishonesty and another being Williams's ex-girlfriend, who had also been proven unreliable; and

WHEREAS, Incentivized testimony, the exchange of information against the accused for reduced jail time or other benefits, is a proven contributor to wrongful convictions, with DNA exoneration studies showing that incentivized witnesses contribute to approximately 14 percent of wrongful convictions in death penalty cases; and

WHEREAS, Studies reveal that for every eight individuals executed, one person on death row is exonerated, highlighting the serious and irreversible miscarriages of justice that lead to too many innocent people sentenced to death; and

WHEREAS, The death penalty is a brutal and ineffective form of punishment that has been abandoned by many wealthy, democratic nations, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, France, and Ireland; and

WHEREAS, Research demonstrates that the death penalty does not effectively deter crime, and in fact, there has been no notable increase in violent crime in states where the death penalty has been abolished; and

WHEREAS, Death penalty cases are significantly more expensive than non-death penalty cases, with the costs of prosecution, defense, and lengthy appeals far exceeding the costs of housing a prisoner for life without parole; and

WHEREAS, The Providence City Council stands firmly against the inequities and injustices in our criminal justice system that disproportionately affect marginalized communities and contribute to wrongful convictions, particularly in death penalty cases; and

WHEREAS, The death penalty's irreversible nature leaves no room for correcting the mistakes of the justice system, and enabling such a practice in the United States undermines our nation's commitment to justice and human rights.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council condemns the decision of the State of Missouri to execute Marcellus Williams, a man whose accusations were seriously weakened by exculpatory evidence and whose execution represents a grievous failure of justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council formally opposes the death penalty in all circumstances and calls for its abolition at both the state and federal levels, recognizing it as a cruel, ineffective, and outdated form of punishment that has no place in a just society.

IN CITY COUNCIL

OCT 17 2024
READ AND PASSED


RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

Effective without the
Mayor's Signature


Tina L. Mastroianni
City Clerk