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The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 N Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
Mr. Larry Morris
Ms. Kelly Doyle
Mr. Adam Luck
Mr. Scott Williams
Mr. Richard Smothermon
2915 N Classen Blvd, Suite 405
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

September 3, 2021

Dear Governor Stitt and Members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board:

Your work has been more critical than ever in recent years. You have begun to disentangle excessive sentences in our criminal legal system, identifying a myriad of injustices and igniting new questions, while searching for long term solutions. In front of you, you have another novel opportunity—a chance to begin to do justice in one of the most egregious cases our state has ever seen. It is never too late to acknowledge a system has resulted in a failed outcome, and for Julius Jones, the man whose life is on the line, it is also never more urgent.

Our state is better for the role you've each had in seeking justice. Whether it was the historic commutations resulting from the Governor's leadership on HB 1269; the decision to send Tondalao Hall, a mother and survivor of domestic violence, home to her children; or your work to utilize medical parole in the face of COVID-19, countless lives, families, and communities are better for your work. You do that work each month in pardon and parole board meetings, as those recommendations go to the Governor's office. Each of those cases is a story of homecoming, of relief, of justice. Many go unnoticed, without the fanfare of the media or even a

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picture as loved ones are reunited. And then some carry the weight of a watching world, hoping you'll exercise the power bestowed on you through your service to the state to save an man's life, that you will commute the sentence of Julius Jones.

Like so many cases you have considered before, Julius Jones had every possible obstacle before him when he was arrested at just 19 years old. The systemic biases and injustices read clearly from his record. He has in some ways served a life sentence already. Spending more years buried alive on death row than he did a free young man in Oklahoma City, passing more birthdays in the isolation of H-Unit than with his loving mother, Madeline Davis-Jones, father, Anthony Jones, and sister, Antoinette Jones—a family who looks to you as their last and only hope.

The facts of the case are simple and clear. Julius Jones did not receive a fair trial. We all know public defenders to be brilliant, and constantly battling in a system in which they are limited by underfunded offices and unsustainable caseloads. All the stresses of that system are compounded when you add the extra work required in a Capital trial. When you read court documents, it becomes quickly clear that Julius never matched the description of the shooter from eyewitness testimony, nor does evidence exist to overturn the several witnesses who spoke to Julius's alibi. But Julius did not have anyone to zealously name that for him in court. Julius was prosecuted by a District Attorney who sent more than 50 people to their deaths—many of those convictions have been overturned or called into question.

We understand that there is a family who wants justice and vengeance, and who must feel distraught throughout this whole process. As former DA Smotherman can tell his fellow board members, there is a group of District Attorneys, who have promised to give closure to a grieving family and a grieving community, and who don't want to face the idea of getting this one wrong. But we each know our criminal justice system is far from infallible. We've each seen those injustices come to pass. It is operated by humans, who make mistakes. And what a rare and incredible opportunity you have in your hands to keep our state and our criminal legal system from making the biggest mistake of all, ending the life of another human being.

Julius was never granted a jury of his peers. He was convicted with inconsistent evidence that ignored so many of the relevant questions and obvious issues, and without zealous defense. For the first time since he encountered the criminal legal system at 19 years old, you hold the power to show him some semblance of justice. We should all lose sleep knowing a man could be killed, in the name of justice, with such embarrassing lack of evidence. A vote, your vote, can reunite Madeline Davis-Jones with her son, and can begin to give Julius an opportunity at living, after decades of waiting to die.

It is with great urgency I ask you to commute Julius's sentence to time served. Justice is in your hands, and I hope you act with it.

Sincerely,



Tamyia Cox-Touré
Executive Director
ACLU of Oklahoma