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Media Advisory

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Georgians Speak Out Against Execution of Mentally-Ill Child Offender Amidst Groundswell of International Attention

Atlanta – Concerned Georgians will hold a press conference to speak out against the scheduled execution of Alexander Williams and call on the Pardons and Parole Board to grant clemency.

The conference will be held on Monday, February 18, at 12 noon outside the “Sloppy” Floyd Administrative Building, which houses the Pardons and Parole Board offices. Speakers will be assembled at the entrance of the walkway at the corner of Piedmont Rd. and Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.

Scheduled speakers include: Gary Parker, a lawyer on Williams’ legal team; Rodney Blair, Williams’ brother; Kristine Medea, Clinical Education Director for the National Mental Health Association of Georgia; Rev. Timothy McDonald, President of Concerned Black Clergy; and Laura Moye, Field Organizer for Amnesty International’s Southern Regional Office.

“People around the world have taken notice of this case,” said Laura Moye, of Amnesty International, “because it is a clear example of the worst aspects of our death penalty. Here is an African-American man who was a minor at the time of the crime, with no shot at equal justice because his court-appointed attorney was too incompetent to raise basic issues about his history of mental illness and abuse at the hands of his family members,” said Moye.

“The state of Georgia wants to execute a man who crawls around on the floor in prison to communicate with imaginary frogs and believes that Sigourney Weaver is God and talks to him,” continued Moye on the issue of Williams’ mental illness.

The National Mental Health Association of Georgia, which does not have a position on the death penalty, is speaking out against this particular execution. Williams has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and experiences psychotic hallucinations. “The execution of a juvenile offender with mental illness demeans our system of justice, heightens the vulnerability of individuals with mental illness and the ethical standing of Georgia,” said the association’s Clinical Education Director, Kristine Medea.

Executing a child offender is a violation of international human rights standards. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Pakistan are the only countries left that execute juvenile offenders besides the USA. China and Yemen have recently abolished the practice. Juveniles are less mature than adults who commit similar crimes and that should make a difference in their sentences. Alexander Williams was not old enough to vote, enter into a legal contract, or drink alcohol, but yet he was deemed old enough to be put to death.

“We are calling upon the Georgia Pardons and Parole Board to grant clemency to Alexander Williams. The life of Aleta Bunch can be honored and justice can be realized without violating international human rights standards and perpetuating the cycle of violence,” said Moye. “The world is watching, Georgia. What example are we going to set?”

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