

URGENT ACTION

TEXAS EXECUTION RESET

Ramiro Gonzales is scheduled to be executed in Texas on June 26, 2024. He was sentenced to death in 2006 for a murder committed in 2001 when he was 18 years old and emerging from a childhood of abuse and neglect. He came within 48 hours of execution in 2022. The courts have since denied the claim that inaccurate and now effectively recanted trial testimony of the state's expert witness in support of a jury determination that Ramiro Gonzales would commit acts of criminal violence if allowed to live undermined his death sentence. His prison record has been one of non-violence and self-development. We urge his execution to be stopped and his death sentence commuted.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 52.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

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Dear Board Member,

Ramiro Felix Gonzales (TDCJ #999513) is scheduled to be executed in Texas on June 26, 2024 for the capital murder of an 18-year-old woman in January 2001. He himself was 18 years and two months old at the time of the murder and emerging from a childhood of serious neglect and abuse. A neuropsychologist testified at trial that Ramiro Gonzales "basically raised himself" and had the emotional maturity of a 13 or 14-year-old.

At the trial, the prosecution presented a psychiatrist who testified that Ramiro Gonzales posed a future danger of criminal violence, had "anti-social personality disorder", and little or no prospect of rehabilitation. He also presented the jury with statistics of a very high rate of recidivism in cases involving sexual assault. In 2022, this psychiatrist acknowledged that these statistics were grossly inaccurate, and he effectively recanted his trial testimony. At the time of the crime, the psychiatrist concluded "Mr. Gonzales was barely 18 years old. With the passage of time and significant maturity he is now a significantly different person both mentally and emotionally". It was now his opinion that Ramiro Gonzales "does not pose a threat of future danger to society."

Ramiro Gonzales, who is now 41 years old, has not committed a single act of violence since he has been on death row. He has acknowledged his crimes and expressed remorse for them. He spends his time reading and studying and is a talented artist.

I urge you to stop the execution of Ramiro Gonzales and to ensure that his death sentence is commuted.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In October 2002, **Ramiro Gonzales** pled guilty to the abduction and rape of a woman in September 2001 and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Soon after he began this sentence, he admitted to the sexual assault and murder of an 18-year-old woman committed in January 2001 while robbing the home of the person who supplied him with drugs. At the time of the murder, Ramiro Gonzales was 71 days past his 18th birthday. The jury convicted him of capital murder and at the sentencing phase of his 2006 trial, the prosecution presented a psychiatrist who testified that Ramiro Gonzales posed a “future danger”, a jury’s finding of which is a prerequisite for a death sentence in Texas. Such predictions have long been shown to be unscientific, unreliable and often, grossly inaccurate.

In 2021, at the request of the appeal lawyers, the same psychiatrist re-evaluated Ramiro Gonzales. He noted that “during our interview, [Ramiro Gonzales] took full responsibility” for the murder “and displayed significant remorse for his actions”, and “although he does not know exactly what he would tell the victim’s mother, he wishes that he could speak to her and try to express his regret”. In his 2022 report, the psychiatrist noted Ramiro Gonzales’s family history of “substance abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse”. He stated that there was “no doubt” that Ramiro Gonzales ended up in his current situation “because of his florid history of substance abuse”, into which he had spiraled after the death in a car accident of an aunt with whom he had become very close. He was 15. His drug use, which began as “self-medication” developed into “severe drug addiction and dependency”. He dropped out of school at 16 and began committing drug-related crimes. At times, he “would remain on a ‘meta[mphetamine]-high’ for as many as seven to ten days”. As Ramiro Gonzales reported to the psychiatrist, “the only thing one can even recognize or acknowledge, at that moment, is the unrelenting desire to obtain more drugs at any cost.”

Ramiro Gonzales’s execution was previously set for July 13, 2022. Two days before the execution, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (TCCA) issued a stay and remanded the case to a county judge to assess the claim that the testimony about recidivism rates was inaccurate and may have affected the jury’s answer to the future dangerousness question. The judge recommended denial of the claim, reasoning that even if the expert’s testimony about the recidivism rates was false, it was not sufficiently prejudicial to require reversal of Gonzales’s death sentence. The TCCA accepted the lower court’s recommendation and denied the claim.

In 2005, when the US Supreme Court belatedly banned the death penalty against individuals who were under 18 at the time of the crime, it recognized young people’s immaturity, impulsiveness, poor judgment, as well as their potential for reform, and noted that “the qualities that distinguish juveniles from adults do not disappear when an individual turns 18”.

Texas accounts for 37% of the USA’s 1,588 executions since 1976. Seventy-eight of the 587 people (13%) put to death in Texas were 18 or 19 at the time of the crime. Since 2014, Texas has executed nine people for crimes committed when they were 18. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, unconditionally.

NAME: Ramiro Gonzales

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: June 26, 2024