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PRESS RELEASE

Innocence Project of Florida Urges Governor to Stay Wayne Tompkins' Execution *New Round of DNA Testing Could Answer Lingering Questions about Victim's Identity*

The Innocence Project of Florida (IPF), in a letter signed by their Executive Director Seth Miller, today urged Florida Governor Charlie Crist to stay the execution of Wayne Tompkins, who is scheduled to be killed on Wednesday by lethal injection. Serious doubts persist about the identity of the victim, and IPF believes a new round of DNA testing is likely to answer these important questions.

"We still harbor grave concerns about the legitimacy of Mr. Tompkins' guilty verdict," said Miller in his letter. "We feel strongly that more time is necessary to look into this case."

Mr. Tompkins was found guilty of murdering Lisa DeCarr in 1983. The evidence against him was circumstantial and consisted of three witnesses, including one jailhouse snitch. The nature of this case is also uncommon because the identity of the victim herself is also in doubt.

The victim's alleged identity was supported at trial by a comparison with dental records which Miller says was "wholly unpersuasive." Since then, several individuals have signed affidavits claiming to have seen her alive since the murder.

"Because the dead body's identity is an issue, [late last year] you ordered DNA testing on bones from that dead body as well as a robe and sash found with the dead body," Miller wrote to Crist. "We presume you did so in order to remove any remaining questions about whether the State of Florida was about to execute an innocent man." That round of testing came back inconclusive, says Miller. But he adds that, "the facts of the case have not changed. The uncertainty surrounding the identity of the alleged victim that led to the last round of DNA testing still exists. There should be clarity about the identity of the alleged victim before we execute a potentially innocent man. That clarity is obtainable in Mr. Tompkins' case."

IPF believes that a new round of DNA testing, involving methods that have not yet been tried in this case, would likely yield results.

Miller pledged to work with Governor Crist to "answer these remaining questions and finally obtain closure in this case," urging patience in order to avoid executing a potentially innocent man on Wednesday.

The Innocence Project of Florida is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to finding and freeing innocent people in Florida prisons. IPF consulted on the DNA issues in the case of Wayne Tompkins.

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