

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/055/2003

4 April 2003

Further information on EXTRA 19/03 (AMR 51/049/2003, 27 March 2003) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Ohio)

Lewis Williams (m), black, aged 44

Lewis Williams was sentenced to death for the murder of an elderly white woman, Leoma Chmielewski, in 1983. Lewis Williams's execution has been rescheduled to take place on 24 June 2003. This is to allow his lawyers more time to assess whether Lewis Williams has mental retardation. In June 2002, the US Supreme Court ruled that the execution of people with mental retardation is unconstitutional.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language, in your own words:

- expressing sympathy for the family of Leoma Chmielewski, explaining that you are not seeking to excuse the manner of her death or to minimize the suffering it will have caused;
- opposing the execution of Lewis Williams and urging clemency in his case;
- expressing concern that the jury heard minimal evidence of the defendant's dysfunctional and abusive background on which to base their sentencing decision;
- noting that even without this information they evidently had trouble reaching a verdict, suggesting that the mitigating evidence that was available could have persuaded one or more jurors to vote for life;
- noting the strong dissenting opinion by a federal judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals that Lewis Williams's trial representation had been "wholly inadequate" at the sentencing phase;
- noting the very high threshold for a successful appeal on inadequate legal representation, and pointing out that the power of executive clemency exists to compensate for the rigidity of the judiciary and harsh or disproportionate sentencing.

APPEALS TO:

Governor Bob Taft, 30th Floor, 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-6117, USA

Telegram: Governor Bob Taft, Columbus, Ohio, USA

Fax: +1 614 466 9354

Email: Governor.Taft@das.state.oh.us

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of USA accredited to your country.

You may also write brief letters (not more than 250 words) to:

Letters to the Editor, *The Plain Dealer*, 1801 Superior Ave., Cleveland 44114, USA.

Fax: + 1 216 999 6209

Email: letters@plained.com

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.