

PUBLIC

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27 June 2003

Further information on EXTRA 25/03 (AMR 51/066/2003, 02 May 2003) and follow-up (AMR 51/071/2003, 9 May 2003) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Ohio)

Jerome Campbell (m), black, aged 42

On 26 June, Governor Bob Taft of Ohio granted clemency to Jerome Campbell, who was scheduled to be executed on 27 June. The Governor commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

In his statement, Governor Taft said: "The case of Jerome Campbell presents a different set of circumstances than the other eight capital cases in which I have denied requests for commutation. In this case, two important pieces of information have come to light that were not available to the jury at the time the death penalty was imposed. First, Mr. Campbell presented significant new DNA evidence that was not available to the jury at the time of trial. Although this new evidence does not exonerate Mr. Campbell, it does contradict an impression that was left in the minds of some jurors during the trial.

Second, attorneys for Mr. Campbell have presented evidence bearing on the credibility of two important prosecution witnesses. It is now apparent that two informants who were incarcerated at the time of their testimony were, in fact, interested in seeking more lenient treatment from prosecutors as a result of their testimony. This information was not presented at trial even though it would have enabled the jurors to more fully assess the veracity of the witnesses' testimony."

The Governor said that he agreed with the Ohio Parole Board's conclusion that the jurors could have reached a different sentencing decision if they had not relied on evidence and testimony the credibility of which was now in doubt. He said: "When such a possibility exists, and in view of the finality of the death penalty, I believe the most responsible course of action is to commute the death sentence in this case to one of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole."

No further action is requested by the UA Network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.