

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/064/2002

25 April 2002

Further information on EXTRA 27/02 (AMR 51/058/2002, 12 April 2002) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Missouri): Christopher Simmons (m), white, aged 25

The Missouri Supreme Court has changed Christopher Simmons's execution date from 1 May to 5 June 2002. The Court gave no explanation for the decision, made on 24 April.

Christopher Simmons, who turns 26 on 26 April, was sentenced to death in 1994 for the murder of Shirley Crook, committed when Simmons was 17 years old. International law prohibits the execution of people who were under 18 at the time of the crime.

See also: *USA: In whose best interests?* (AMR 51/063/2002, 24 April 2002), available on www.amnesty.org.

Please continue appeals as detailed in the original action, that is:

- expressing sympathy for the family and friends of Shirley Crook, and explaining that you are not seeking in any way to excuse her murder;
- expressing concern that Missouri intends to kill Christopher Simmons, in violation of international law, respected in almost every country, which prohibits the execution of people who were under 18 at the time of the crime, in recognition of the immaturity of young people and their potential for rehabilitation;
- noting that the power of executive clemency exists to compensate for errors and inequities in the legal system, and that the Governor can now consider the mitigating evidence that the jury never heard, as well as taking full account of the improper arguments of the prosecution;
- urging the governor to commute this death sentence in the interest of justice, decency, international law, and the reputation of his state.

APPEALS TO:

Governor Bob Holden
Missouri Capitol Building, Room 218
PO Box 720, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0720, USA
Fax: + 1 573 751 1495
Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

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

Letters to the Editor, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 900 N. Tucker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63101, USA
Fax: + 1 314 340 3139
E-mail: letters@post-dispatch.com

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.