

# DEATH PENALTY ACTION

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## **US Marine Veteran to be Executed in Mississippi Executions Resume This Week: Petition Delivery Tuesday at 10am CT**

Jackson, MS - Death penalty opponents will address the planned resumption of executions in Mississippi this week with a press conference on the NORTH side of the State Capitol Building at 10am on December 13, 2022, and prayerful protest vigils on December 14th if the execution goes forward. Thomas Loden, Jr. is scheduled to be killed at Mississippi State Penitentiary (AKA Parchman Farm) at 6pm CT on December 14, 2022 for his murder of Leesa Marie Gray in 2000.

If executed, Loden, who served 18 years in the US Marine Corps including combat duty during Operation Desert Storm, will be the third US Marine veteran to be executed in the United States in recent months. His will be the 18th and final execution in the United States in 2022. This will be the first execution of a non-consenting prisoner in Mississippi since 2012, when six prisoners were killed. A prisoner who waived his appeals and requested that his execution proceed was killed by the State of Mississippi in November, 2021.

Several events are planned in conjunction with local Mississippi death penalty opponents.

- A press conference is scheduled for 10am CT on Tuesday, December 13 on the NORTH side of the Mississippi State Capitol Building in Jackson, across the street from the MS Supreme Court, which set the date, and the AG's office in the Sillers Building, which asked for the date to be set.
- A prayerful protest vigil will take place beginning at 5pm CT on Wednesday, November 17 in front of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.
- A simultaneous Virtual Vigil will be hosted on-line via Zoom and live-streamed on various Facebook pages, facilitated by the national group, Death Penalty Action. Registration to join the zoom audience is [here](#).

"This is the third US Marine veteran to be executed in the United States this year," said Abraham Bonowitz, executive director of the national group, Death Penalty Action. "Loden served honorably for 18 years, including in combat in Operation Desert Storm. He was an exemplary Marine, such that his career ended as a recruiter."

According to reports, Loden stopped to help the victim when her car broke down. She rejected his suggestion that she consider the Marines as a career opportunity, which caused him to attack her.

"Clearly, something in him snapped for him to commit such a horrific crime," said Mitzi Magleby, a spokesperson for the Mississippi chapter of Ignite Justice. "Mr. Loden was immediately remorseful. When arrested soon after the crime, he had carved the words 'I'm sorry' into his chest. Shouldn't there be room for grace and mercy in such a situation?"

Death penalty opponents in Mississippi are appealing to Governor Tate Reeves to grant mercy to Mr. Loden. They will deliver a [petition](#) signed by thousands of Mississippians and others following their media event at 10am on Tuesday.

"Regardless of one's feelings about the death penalty, no one can argue that government can be trusted to always get it right, or that capital punishment is an effective public policy," said Bonowitz. "We can be safe from people who have committed terrible crimes, and punish them severely, without executions. Indeed, that is exactly what we do in the vast majority of cases where execution is a possible punishment."

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