

# DEATH PENALTY ACTION

For Immediate Release

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## **SPIRITUAL ADVISOR SUES ALABAMA OVER RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AT PLANNED GAS CHAMBER EXECUTION**

MONTGOMERY, AL - December 13, 2023: The spiritual advisor scheduled to accompany Alabama death row prisoner Kenneth Smith as Smith is put to death in the first-ever use of nitrogen hypoxia as a method of execution [has filed a lawsuit](#) against the State of Alabama asserting the execution protocol presents potentially significant dangers to his own life, and violates the religious liberties of both himself and Mr. Smith. The controversial execution is scheduled for January 25, 2024 at Holman Prison in Atmore, Alabama.

Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood, spiritual advisor to Kenneth Smith, will speak with the media and answer questions in a Zoom press conference hosted by Death Penalty Action at 10am CT on Thursday, December 14, 2024. [Members of the media may click here to register to participate.](#) Permission is granted to record and broadcast the proceedings.

[Click here to view the lawsuit.](#)

Also present and available for questions will be Esther Brown of Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty (an Alabama organization), Cantor Mike Zoosman of L'chaim! Jews Against the Death Penalty, and Abraham Bonowitz, executive director of Death Penalty Action.

Death Penalty Action has been working with Alabama partners to raise concerns about executions in Alabama which are spelled out in three different petitions available at [DeathPenaltyAction.org](#).

The petition opposing the execution of Kenneth Smith, who survived a previous execution attempt in September, 2022, is at [bit.ly/KennethSmithAL](#)

The petition opposing the use of the gas chamber in Alabama and elsewhere in the United States, signed by Jewish clergy and others, is at [bit.ly/NoGasChamberDPA](#)

The "[Pull Back The Curtains](#)" petition demands greater transparency in Alabama executions. In light of the horrific torture of Joe James, Jr. in July 2022, followed by two failed executions later in 2022, the groups have been demanding that media and other public witnesses observe the proceedings "from the moment a prisoner walks him or herself into the death chamber until they are declared dead."

Alabama organizations participating in the Pull Back the Curtains campaign include:

- ACLU of Alabama
- Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
- Alabama Arise
- Alabama CURE
- Alabama New South Coalition
- Alabama Poor People's Campaign
- Alabama State Conference of the NAACP
- BEC2BAMA
- Civil Rights Memorial Center - Southern Poverty Law Center
- Death Penalty Action
- Episcopal Peace Fellowship
- Faith in Action Alabama
- Greater Birmingham Ministries
- Green County Democrat
- Joe James, et al --**PRESENTE!**
- Justice and Mercy for All, Birmingham
- L'Chaim! Jews Against the Death Penalty
- M.A.A.V.I.S.
- Mary's House Catholic Worker, Birmingham
- North Alabama Peace Network
- Patch Adams, MD - The Gesundheit! Institute
- Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty
- Red Letter Christians
- Restorative Solutions
- Restorative Strategies, LLC
- turner mcalh & Associates, BC
- Vine and Fig Tree Community

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