

Press Release  
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Contact: Kevin Werner, State Program  
Coordinator of Ohioans to Stop Executions  
(w) 614-560-0654, (c) 610-764-5732  
e-mail: [otse.org@gmail.com](mailto:otse.org@gmail.com)

### **Kenny Richey Released: Ohio releases Richey weeks after New Jersey repeal for fears of executing innocent**

Kenny Richey was released Monday, January 7, 2008 after sitting on Ohio's death row more than 21 years for a crime he may not have committed. Richey maintained his innocence throughout his trial, appeals and now as he is released. Richey was released just weeks after the state of New Jersey repealed its death penalty law out of fear of executing an innocent person. This calls further attention to the fact that our system is broken and is in desperate need of scrutinized review and study.

Kenny Richey lived our worst nightmare: facing execution on Ohio's death row while serious questions of innocence remained unanswered. He maintained his innocence and can now walk again as a free man. Much of the evidence suggests his innocence. In fact, there was so much doubt, primarily due to errors, that Richey was granted a new trial last August. After spending more than 20 years on death row and facing another trial in Putnam County, it is no surprise that Richey chose to offer no defense and opt to be released for time already served. Sister Alice Gerdeman, who grew up in Putnam County, Chair of Ohioans to Stop Executions, said "we have known for years that the death penalty risks executing innocent people. We are thankful that Mr. Richey did not have to lose his life due to the flawed policy and ineffectiveness of Ohio's death penalty. We are thankful that he will be able to return home to see his mother for the first time in over 21 years. We are thankful for the countless hours that his legal team worked to defend him and bring light to his claims of innocence."

The American Bar Association's Death Penalty Assessment Team reports that safeguards that would protect the innocent from being sentenced to death are sorely lacking in Ohio's death penalty system. In fact Ohio fails to meet 93% of the ABA's criteria for fairness and accuracy in administering the death penalty. Throughout recent events in New Jersey, where the death penalty was legislatively abolished, law makers faced the same questions of innocence, cost and ineffective counsel. Since Ohio has similar glaring problems with a broken system as New Jersey, the state should conduct a comprehensive review of its death penalty. "Mr. Richey became a victim of Ohio's flawed death penalty system and the state should take steps to make sure errors do not happen again," said Gerdeman.

Mr. Richey is not the only victim of Ohio's flawed system. The family of Cynthia Collins has been overlooked through years of wasted spending when resources should have been available for counseling and services to the victim's family. Residents of Putnam County have also suffered for having tax dollars diverted from public safety programs and much needed community programs that would have improved the quality of life. We can only hope that no one ever has to live through what the Richey family, the Collins family and the residents of Putnam County have been through over the past 21 years.

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