

Press Release

Thursday, May 19, 2016

AG Pruitt Announces Conclusion of MCGJ Investigation of DOC, Execution Protocol

OKLAHOMA CITY – Attorney General Scott Pruitt announced Thursday the Fifteenth Multicounty Grand Jury has concluded its investigation of Department of Corrections and the state’s execution protocol.

Attorney General Pruitt released the following statement:

“Last fall, when a problem with the lethal injection protocol of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections occurred, I promised the people of Oklahoma that my office would conduct a full and complete investigation into the Department of Correction’s (DOC) handling of the matter. We had a responsibility to find out exactly what happened, and we have.

“There is no more serious exercise of state authority than carrying out a death sentence. That profound responsibility should be undertaken with precision and solemnity. There are no winners and losers in this process. Our paramount objective must be to ensure that justice is done, legally, constitutionally and with careful cognizance to the rights of the victims of these crimes and the suffering their families have endured.

“Today, I regret to advise the citizens of Oklahoma that the Department of Corrections failed to do its job. As is evident in the report from the multicounty grand jury, a number of individuals responsible for carrying out the execution process were careless, cavalier and in some circumstances dismissive of established procedures that were intended to guard against the very mistakes that occurred.

“The report clearly details the mistakes that were made and sets out a series of concise recommendations for ensuring that these mistakes are avoided in the future.

“When the state fails to do its job in carrying out an execution, the ability to dispense justice is impaired for all. This must never happen again.

“With the Department of Corrections now under the leadership of former FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh, I am confident that the changes to the

execution protocol the multicounty grand jury has recommended will be implemented with diligence and dispatch. And I have told him he has my full and complete support in this regard.

“It is important to note that the multicounty grand jury has recommended the state consider the advisability of adopting nitrogen hypoxia as the state’s execution protocol. I look forward to working with the Governor and the Oklahoma Legislature in the careful and deliberate consideration and review of this proposal.

“Lastly, my thanks are with the men and women serving on the multicounty grand jury who spent countless hours listening to testimony and reviewing evidence. They were charged not to reach a preconceived outcome in this inquiry but rather to review the evidence and listen to the sworn testimony and determine the truth about what happened here. They have done their job, wisely and well, and I appreciate their service.”

The multicounty grand jury has jurisdiction to investigate criminal matters in all 77 counties, assisting local law enforcement as well as handling matters of state interest. The grand jurors meet regularly to hear testimony in the matters being considered by the grand jury. The proceedings are closed to the public.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the multicounty grand jury interim report.

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