

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



*Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law*

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## **The Constitution Project Commends Kitzhaber for Death Penalty Decision**

WASHINGTON, DC—The Constitution Project, a nonpartisan civil liberties watchdog group, today commended Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber for his decision to impose a moratorium on proceeding with any additional executions until the state can resolve concerns about fairness, arbitrariness, and accuracy of the death penalty.

Earlier this week, Kitzhaber announced the state would not proceed with the execution of Gary Haugen scheduled for December 6, and would not carry out any other death penalty sentences until the legislature reviewed the issue.

“Americans of all backgrounds, politics and religious philosophies are strongly concerned about the administration of capital punishment in our nation,” wrote Virginia Sloan, president of The Constitution Project (TCP), in a letter to Kitzhaber.

“These concerned individuals include both those who believe that capital punishment may be appropriate in certain circumstances, as well as those who oppose it on moral grounds or because they believe it simply cannot be carried out in a fair and accurate manner,” she wrote.

Sloan noted an independent, bipartisan panel convened by TCP more than decade ago reached the conclusion that procedural safeguards and assurances of fundamental fairness in the administration of capital punishment are deeply flawed in most states. The panel includes former state and federal prosecutors, judges, law enforcement officials, policymakers, corrections officials, defense lawyers, victim advocates and others.

According to Sloan, Kitzhaber recognized Oregon is not immune to these flaws in the administration of capital punishment, including arbitrariness and inaccuracy.

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*Created out the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project (TCP) brings together policy experts and legal practitioners from across the political spectrum to foster consensus-based solutions to the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time. TCP seeks to reform the nation’s broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.*