

# THE OKLAHOMAN

## Oklahoma's botched execution prompts comments from across the U.S.

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Several people involved in the case and opponents of the death penalty around the country issued statements Wednesday in reaction to the botched lethal injection of Clayton Lockett on Tuesday evening.

The parents of Lockett's victim, Stephanie Neiman, 19, issued a statement through the state attorney general's office. A spokeswoman from the office said the parents "do not desire to issue any further statements on their daughter's murder or the execution." The hand-written statement from Steve and Susie Neiman is dated "4-29-14." It reads: "God blessed us with our precious daughter, Stephanie for 19 years. Stephanie loved children. She worked in Vacation Bible School and always helped with our Church nativity scenes. She was the joy of our life. We are thankful this day has finally arrived and justice will finally be served."

Other comments:

- Dean Sanderford, Lockett's attorney, commenting on Gov. Mary Fallin's review plan: "In order to understand exactly what went wrong in last night's horrific execution, and restore any confidence in the execution process, the death of Clayton Lockett must be investigated by a truly independent organization, not a state employee or agency."
- The Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, archbishop of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: "The execution of Clayton Lockett really highlights the brutality of the death penalty, and I hope it leads us to consider whether we should adopt a moratorium on the death penalty or even abolish it altogether. We certainly need to administer justice with due consideration for the victims of crime, but we must find a way of doing so that does not contribute to the culture of death, which threatens to completely erode our sense of the innate dignity of the human person and of the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death."
- Mark White, former Texas governor and co-chairman of The Constitution Project's Death Penalty Committee: "(Tuesday) night, we witnessed the latest — and what, by all indications, appears to be the worst — chapter thus far in the practice of human experimentation in the execution of prisoners by lethal injection. In the face of growing drug shortages due to manufacturers' refusal to permit use of their products to kill people, some state governments have started down a haphazard and dangerous path. They have begun to hastily attempt to execute prisoners with drugs never before used for that purpose, often with compounds obtained in secret from undisclosed sources, hoping through trial and error to hit on a method that might work. The botched execution of Clayton Lockett is the horrific, if sadly predictable,

result. Americans may want tough justice, but most do not want to be cruel or inhumane in executing even the most heinous of criminals, and this was exactly that.”

- Jerry J. Cox, president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers: “NACDL unequivocally opposes the death penalty on numerous grounds, but this latest installment in a long series of botched executions should shock the conscience of all Americans, including those who have to this point supported what is, at its core, a barbaric and medieval practice. The death penalty is a stain on the honor of this great nation. And it must stop. Now.”

- Bert Brandenburg, executive director of the nonpartisan, nonprofit Justice at Stake: “The governmental trainwreck in Oklahoma, where a court-ordered stay of execution was overturned amid pressure to impeach the justices, resulted in a disgraceful outcome (Tuesday) night. Political tampering with the courts led to a state torturing one of its prisoners to death. Our courts were created to protect rights and force deliberation, and this rush to execution reinforces how important it is for us to be vigilant about protecting courts’ authority.”

- Antonio Ginatta, U.S. advocacy director at Human Rights Watch: “People convicted of crimes should not be test subjects for a state’s grisly experiments. (Tuesday) night’s botched execution was nothing less than state-sanctioned torture.”

*Article can be found [here](#).*