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Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law

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Contact: Larry Akey, Director of Communications, (202)580-6922 [o] or (202)580-9313 [c]
lakey@constitutionproject.org

Pennsylvania Governor Halts Executions ***TCP Board Member Advises Wolf on Death Penalty*** ***Moratorium***

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Virginia Sloan, president of The Constitution Project, a bipartisan legal watchdog group, offered the following comment in response to Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's announcement earlier today that he had suspended the death penalty:

"Governor Wolf is to be commended for taking this important step. Regardless of their backgrounds, politics or religious philosophies, Pennsylvanians should be strongly concerned about the administration of capital punishment, including those who believe that the death penalty 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."

In 2011, the Pennsylvania legislature created an advisory commission to examine administration of the death penalty. Wolf [indicated](#) the "moratorium will remain in effect until this commission has produced its recommendation and all concerns are addressed satisfactorily." Pennsylvania has not executed an inmate since 1999 and has carried out only three executions since 1976.

TCP board member Judge Timothy K. Lewis [advised](#) Wolf in the process of reaching his decision. Lewis served as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and, before that, as a judge for the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Sloan said she was "delighted that Governor Wolf sought Judge Lewis's advice and took the actions he did."

The Constitution Project Death Penalty Committee released a [comprehensive report](#) on the administration of capital punishment in May, and many of its findings mirror those described by Wolf in his declaration of a suspension of executions.

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Created out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project 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 through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.

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The Constitution Project | 1200 18th Street, NW | Suite 1000 | Washington | DC | 20036