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Statement of Robert Dunham, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, on Marcellus Williams' Stay of Execution

Governor Greitens' decision to stay Marcellus Williams' execution is an important step in ensuring that Missouri does not execute an innocent man. The Governor did the right thing in creating a Board of Inquiry to look into Mr. Williams' case. Executing Mr. Williams without the courts or any agency of the executive branch meaningfully considering his evidence of innocence would have been intolerable and indefensible.

It is important to note, however, that Mr. Williams' petitions for review are still pending in the U.S. Supreme Court and still present some very important issues. Irrespective of whatever the Board of Inquiry ultimately recommends, the Court should still review Williams' case and should clearly declare that the constitution guarantees that death-row prisoners who present substantial evidence of their innocence be given a meaningful opportunity to prove it in court.

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The Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org) is a national nonprofit organization that for a quarter century has provided information and analysis on issues concerning capital punishment. DPIC prepares in-depth reports and issue analyses, conducts briefings for the media, and serves as a resource to those working on death penalty issues.