

Media Advisory
September 23, 2008

National Project Launch

Murder Victims' Families Oppose Death Penalty for People with Severe Mental Illnesses

Washington, D.C.— Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will launch a national project opposing the death penalty for persons with severe mental illnesses at a press conference in San Antonio, Texas on October 3.

The initiative builds on recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that raise questions about the capacity of individuals diagnosed with severe mental illnesses sentenced to death to understand why they are being executed or even that they will die. A national report on the issue will be released in June 2009, based in part on testimony from family members at San Antonio event.

WHAT: National project launch—press conference

WHEN: Friday, October 3, 2008 3:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

WHERE: University of the Incarnate Word
Bonilla Science Hall 129
Hildenbrande—just west of Broadway intersection
San Antonio, TX 78209

WHO: Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR)
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- **Renny Cushing**, MVFHR Executive Director
- **Ron Honberg**, NAMI Policy & Legal Director
- **Bill Babbitt**, brother of a Vietnam veteran, who was diagnosed with PTSD and schizophrenia, killed a 78-year old woman, and was executed.
- **Lois Robison**, a mother whose mentally ill son was discharged from a hospital when his insurance ran out. A county hospital could not admit him unless he became violent. He killed five people. Instead of treatment, he got the death penalty.
- **Kim Crespi**, mother of victims murdered by husband who suffers from mental illness

- **Amanda & Nick Wilcox**, parents of victim who was murdered by a person with mental illness
- Other family members of murder victims or executed persons from around the United States

MVFHR is a national organization of family members of murder victims and families of the executed. NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots organization dedicated to helping individuals and families affected by mental illnesses.

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