

CAPITAL CASE
(Execution Date: September 30, 2026)
Case No. M2020-01156-SC-DPE-DD

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE
AT NASHVILLE

Christa Gail Pike,
Movant,

v.

State of Tennessee,
Respondent.

Criminal Court for Knox County
No. 58183A

Emergency Motion to Halt and Stay Execution

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The Tennessee Department of Correction began the execution of Petitioner Christa Gail Pike this evening. At 8:26 p.m. execution witnesses reported that the executioners had injected both syringes of lethal injection chemicals and Pike is still alive and snoring.

This execution is causing Ms. Pike unnecessary agony and occurring in violation of his right to be executed free of cruel and unusual punishment. U.S. Const. amend. VIII. The prolonged nature of an attempt to execute her is causing Ms. Pike to suffer superadded physical and mental suffering.

The Department of Correction must also immediately begin lifesaving measures. Executions cannot be completed by withholding necessary healthcare once a stay is ordered. Instead, an inmate's rights to adequate medical care revert to them. Failure to provide such care constitutes deliberate indifference to legitimate, serious medical needs. Allowing the State to inflict serious injury without providing appropriate, lifesaving medical treatment is itself cruel and unusual punishment: "The Eighth Amendment forbids prison officials from 'unnecessarily and wantonly inflicting pain' on an inmate by acting with 'deliberate indifference' toward the inmate's serious medical needs." *Blackmore v.*

Kalamazoo Cnty., 390 F.3d 890, 895 (6th Cir. 2004) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)).

CONCLUSION

Ms. Pike, through counsel, moves this Court to

- immediately HALT and STAY the continuation of this execution;
- require the Tennessee Department of Correction to remove the IV catheters (see Protocol, page 23: “Upon receiving notification [of a stay of execution], the Warden . . . directs the IV Team to remove the catheters . . .”); and
- require the Tennessee Department of Correction to immediately take all possible lifesaving measures on Ms. Pike.

Respectfully submitted,

FEDERAL DEFENDER SERVICES
OF EASTERN TENNESSEE, INC.

By: /s/ Luke P. Ihnen
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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

In accordance with Tenn. R. App. P. 30(e) of Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 46 § 3.02, the total number of words in this supplemental briefing, exclusive of the Title/Cover page, Table of Contents, Table of Authorities, Attorney Signature Block, and this Certificate of Compliance is 6,406. This word count is based upon the word processing system used to prepare this brief.

/s/ Luke P. Ihnen
Luke P. Ihnen
Assistant Federal Defender

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of this document was filed and served via the Court's electronic filing system on the 30th day of September 2026.

/s/ *Luke P. Ihnen*

Luke P. Ihnen
Assistant Federal Defender