



The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor of South Carolina
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Peter Wittig

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Dear Governor Haley,

As Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, I am writing to you regarding the case of Mr. Christopher Williams. Mr. Williams is a dual U.S.-German citizen who was sentenced to death in South Carolina in 2005 and is currently in post-conviction proceedings. It is my understanding that his case will be heard by the South Carolina Supreme Court in March, after which his state appeals will be exhausted. I write to share the very serious concerns that Germany has about this particular case.

While I do not wish to justify or even minimize the severity of Mr. William's crime, I do believe it is important to consider Mr. Williams's mental illness as well as his family history of physical and sexual abuse in weighing the proportionality of his punishment. As a result of his troubled background—both his parents were substance abusers—Mr. Williams suffers from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Unfortunately, Mr. Williams's mental impairments were not taken into account during his trial because his counsel had failed to present evidence of his condition to the jury, resulting in a sentence that runs contrary to the U.S. Supreme Court's limitations on applying the death penalty to individuals with mental illness.

Moreover, Mr. Williams's death sentence has been upheld despite the clear oversight by his defense attorneys in not recognizing his German citizenship and thus failing to involve the German government in his defense. We were not informed of the case against Mr. Williams until after his trial and conviction.

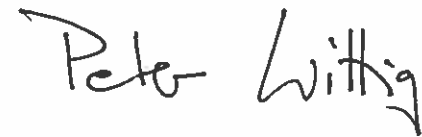
Thus, key mitigating evidence was not presented to the jury and Mr. Williams was denied support that might have affected the outcome of the penalty phase, if not the case-in-chief itself. The actions Germany would have taken in support of Mr. Williams include:

- Monitoring and assisting counsel through trial and appellate review and securing alternative trial or penalty-phase counsel, if necessary;
- Assisting with the investigation of mitigating facts—including by uncovering Mr. Williams’s Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in a timely fashion;
- Attending the trial and sentencing to ensure interest in and focus on the case.

While we regret not having been involved in the case prior to trial and thus not being able to provide these essential services, my government now takes the opportunity to express its deepest reservations about possible imposition of the death penalty in this case.

Germany and South Carolina have long enjoyed very good relations. It is in this spirit that I write of Germany’s serious concerns about the possible execution of one of our nationals in South Carolina.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Wittig". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.