

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor
Repeat Violent Offenders
NEWSLETTER UPDATE: May 22, 2024

RE: DENNIS WATKINS' TESTIMONY BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. "WE NEED TO KICKSTART CARRYING OUT THE DEATH PENALTY LAW STARTING WITH SERIAL KILLER/CHILD RAPIST STANLEY ADAMS SCHEDULED FOR EXECUTION ON FEBRUARY 19, 2025."



Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, had the honor to testify before the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee in support of legislation to permit the use of nitrogen hypoxia for carrying out Ohio's death penalty. ([See attached copy of outline of presentation, dated May 21, 2024](#))

Joining Watkins in voicing support for the bill proposed by state Reps Brian Stewart and Phill Plummer, were Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and Louis Tobin, Executive Director of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorney Association.

Watkins said the legislation is needed to “kickstart the state’s stalled capital punishment system.” He said he wants to see justice for victims of such heinous murders committed by death row inmates like Trumbull County’s Stanley Adams and Danny Lee Hill. The mother of Hill’s victim Raymond Fife has waited almost 39 years “twisting in the wind” waiting to see justice done in the case, which has faced a barrage of appeals that seem never ending.

“I have been actively pursuing the death penalty in appropriate cases for over 40 years,” Watkins said in his address that took about seven minutes in the William McKinley Hearing Room of the ornate state capitol in Columbus. When Watkins was finished speaking, not one of the committee members present asked a question.

In his remarks, Watkins emphasized the State should do whatever is necessary to carry out death sentences that have been imposed by judges and juries across Ohio.

“If it includes nitrogen gas, I’m for it,” he said, “If it includes the firing squad, I’m for it.” Watkins emphasized that he wanted capital defendants to have more choices, as long as they are constitutional.

Watkins also referenced a 2009 Trumbull County case in which death row inmate Kenneth Biros was executed using a single drug after a previous Ohio execution attempt with the standard three-drug cocktail failed earlier that year. Watkins praised then-Gov. Ted Strickland for carrying out the “last dying wish” of the victim’s mother.

Some on the committee questioned the uncertainty of going forward with the nitrogen gas execution method because it is new. Watkins pointed out

that it was the leadership of the governor's office under Strickland and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in 2009 (taking about seven months) that brought about the first single-drug protocol execution in the nation's history.

"Don't worry about others. Do the right thing," he said.

Watkins told the House Oversight Committee members: "We have a fair system in Ohio, and that system has worked. And it has worked three times in Trumbull County — if we have the willpower." Watkins' office had successfully prosecuted Biros, Jason Getsy, and Roderick Davie of committing capital crimes, with their executions later successfully carried out via lethal injections.

Along with the Trumbull County Prosecutor, testifying before the committee were Attorney General Dave Yost and Executive Director Lou Tobin of the Ohio Prosecutors' Association.

Yost noted that pharmaceutical companies refusing to sell Ohio the necessary drugs is an impediment to carrying out justice.

"Call it a private sector pardon," Yost told the legislators. "It's preposterous, and it ought to be rejected out of hand. This bill will put an end to the stalemate and restore Ohio's sovereign power to act."

Tobin stated polls still show the public is heavily in favor of the death penalty when you ask respondents if the crimes involve raping and killing children and mass or serial killing. He said nitrogen hypoxia has already been carried out in Alabama, and a handful of other states, including Oklahoma and Mississippi, have approved the protocol.



In conclusion, Prosecutor Watkins' message is that Stanley Adams is a case pending where meaningful action can be taken to see justice for the victims. "This monster killer has not filed any appeals in more than seven years," Watkins said. "It is final, all that is left is for the government to do its duty and execute the judgment of the court."

"Stanley Adams is the personification of evil." ([See attached Repeat Violent Offenders' Newsletter dated](#)

[March 7, 2024](#))

"Importantly, this death row inmate was the lead subject in Attorney General Yost's Executive Summary in his annual 2023 Capital Crimes Report." ([see attached copy of that report, pages 3-7](#))

The Ohio Network's coverage of Watkins' testimony is linked below. His testimony starts about 26:30 and ends about 35:10.

<https://www.ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-house-government-oversight-committee-5-21-2024?start=26:30&end=35:10>

For more information, contact Guy M. Vogrin, investigator/public information officer for the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office at 330-675-2485.