



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Supreme Court Declines to Hear Death Penalty Case Challenging Anti-Gay Bias in the Jury Box**

The U.S. Supreme Court today announced it would not review the case of Charles Rhines despite compelling evidence that at least some of the jurors sentenced him to death in part because he is gay. Last month, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) filed an [amicus brief](#) urging the Court to hear the case and hold that sexual orientation discrimination has no place in the administration of justice.

“Allowing Charles Rhines’ death sentence to stand defies Constitutional protections and breaks with Supreme Court precedent,” said [Daniel Harawa](#), Assistant Counsel at LDF. “Bias of any kind has no place in the jury box, especially in a death penalty case where the Eighth Amendment’s protections against the arbitrary imposition of a capital sentence is implicated. The Supreme Court is uniquely empowered to eradicate discrimination from the jury system, and this disappointing decision undermines public confidence in the administration of justice and the rule of law.”

In Mr. Rhines’ case, one of the jurors signed an affidavit in which he invoked a disturbing anti-gay stereotype, stating that, “that if [Mr. Rhines] is gay, we’d be sending him where he wants to go if we voted for [life imprisonment].” Another juror added that during deliberations there was, “lots of discussion of homosexuality” and there “was a lot of disgust.” These remarks show that contrary to the principle underscored in the Supreme Court’s 2017 decision in *Buck v. Davis* – that “[o]ur law punishes people for what they do, not who they are” – some jurors sentenced Mr. Rhines to death not because of his actions, but rather who he is. LDF was lead counsel in *Buck v. Davis* and remains committed to eradicating discrimination in all of its forms from the criminal justice system.

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*

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