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MELISSA LUCIO FAMILY MEMBERS & #FreeMelissaLucio SUPPORTERS TO ATTEND HEARING

Austin, TX - John Lucio, Melissa Lucio's oldest son, and Guadalupe DeLeon, Melissa's aunt, will be joined by numerous #FreeMelissaLucio supporters at the House Interim Study Commission on Criminal Justice Reform hearing on the death penalty at 3pm today, April 12, 2022, in the Texas State Capitol Building in Austin. The hearing, called to discuss "the death penalty," is expected to feature live testimony via zoom by Cameron County District Attorney Luis Saenz, the only person with the unilateral power to halt the pending execution of Melissa Lucio, an innocent woman scheduled to be killed in just 15 days, on April 27th.



Yesterday in front of the Cameron County Administrative Offices in Brownsville, TX, Lucio family members and supporters called on Saenz to "Be The Hero" by using his power to rescind the execution warrant, reinvestigate the case, and free Melissa Lucio. [Images and videos are on the Free Melissa Lucio Campaign Facebook Page](#). Permission is granted for news media usage of same.

On March 23rd, [John Lucio was able to speak briefly with District Attorney Saenz \(video\)](#), who surprised everyone when he promised John that he would read the statements of four jurors who convicted and condemned Melissa Lucio 15 years ago. This was after issuing a statement in January saying he would follow the will of the jury and telling Melissa's lawyers and also a group of local domestic violence experts that he would not intervene.

"Now that District Attorney Saenz has had a chance to see the declarations of the jurors in my mother's case, we are asking him to be the hero in this story, and withdraw the death warrant, drop the charges and free my mom," said John Lucio. "He's also had plenty of time to watch the film about this case, which is what we have been asking all along. If he does that, my *Momma Bear* is coming home."

It is unknown whether Saenz has seen the film, *The State of Texas vs. Melissa* or read the clemency petition yet, however he will likely be asked questions about the contents of both if he honors the request of Texas Representative Jeff Leach, Chairman of the bi-partisan Interim Study Commission on Criminal Justice Reform. Rep. Leach and Vice-Chairman Joe Moody have demanded that Saenz testify at today's hearing.

Death Penalty Action executive director Abraham Bonowitz, who oversees the #FreeMelissaLucio campaign in conjunction with John Lucio, will also be in attendance.

"This is a unique opportunity for an elected official like Mr. Saenz," said Bonowitz. "This entire case is rooted in the corruption of Saenz's predecessor, Armondo Villalobos, who is now in a halfway house after serving years in prison on corruption charges that taint Melissa's conviction and death sentence. Will he stand on that corruption, or will he 'do justice?' The world is watching."

Bonowitz also noted the stated purpose of today's hearing: to 'discuss the death penalty.'

"On April 21st Texas plans to execute Carl Buntion, who is guilty of murdering Houston Constable James Irby. Carl Buntion has served 30 years in the harsh conditions of Texas' death row. At age 78 he is too old and sick to pose any future danger. Buntion has hepatitis, arthritis, can barely walk and uses a wheelchair to get around. I hope the Commission will also discuss the efficacy and absurdity of executions like that."

[Read Buntion's clemency petition here.](#)