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12 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
13 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
14 SAN JOSE DIVISION

15 PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE,  
16  
17 Plaintiff,  
18 v.  
19 MATTHEW CATE, Secretary of the  
California Department of Corrections and  
20 Rehabilitation; et al.,  
21 Defendants.

Case No. 5:06-cv-01793-JF

**DEATH PENALTY CASE**

**STATEMENT OF PACIFIC NEWS  
SERVICE IN RESPONSE TO COURT'S  
ORDER DIRECTING BRIEFING  
FOLLOWING REMAND FROM THE  
NINTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS**

Dept: Courtroom 3, 5th Floor  
Judge: Hon. Jeremy Fogel

22 MICHAEL ANGELO MORALES,  
23  
24 Plaintiff,  
25 v.  
26 MATTHEW CATE, Secretary of the  
California Department of Corrections and  
27 Rehabilitation; et al.,  
28 Defendants.

Case No. 5:06-cv-00219-JF-HRL  
Case No. 5:06-cv-00926-JF-HRL

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff Pacific News Service (“PNS”) submits this statement in response to the Court’s Order Directing Briefing Following Remand (“Order Directing Briefing”), which was issued this morning, September 28, 2010, and which requested briefing within six hours of its posting. The Order Directing Briefing, which follows the Ninth Circuit Order (“Remand Order”) remanding the case to this Court, requests briefing on:

- The legality of California’s lethal injection protocol, and the material differences between California’s current protocol, enacted by California Code of Regulations Title 15, sections 3349 *et seq.*, and the prior protocol, O.P. 770;
- The effect of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Baze v. Rees*, 553 U.S. 35 (2008);
- The standards for a stay as articulated in *Nelson v. Campbell*, 541 U.S. 637, 649-50 (2004); and
- Any other issues raised in the Remand Order.

California’s current lethal injection protocol, like its predecessor O.P. 770, violates the First Amendment right of the press and the public to meaningfully witness executions. California’s use of pancuronium bromide—a drug that has no legitimate penological purpose in the execution protocol, such as hastening death or reducing pain—is a chemical curtain that serves only to suppress information that the press and the public is entitled to view at an execution. The Ninth Circuit’s decision in *California First Amendment Coalition v. Woodford*, 299 F.3d 868 (9th Cir. 2002) (“*CFAC I*”), *modifying in part*, 150 F.3d 976 (9th Cir. 1998) (“*CFAC I*”) (collectively, “*CFAC*”), compels this result. Indeed, California’s recent filings with this Court, admitting its ability to proceed with a “one-drug” execution that omits pancuronium bromide, further proves that that drug is unnecessary, and serves only to suppress First Amendment-protected information gathering. The Supreme Court’s decision in *Baze* does not alter this conclusion, because *Baze* is an Eighth Amendment, not a First Amendment, case.

On the issues regarding a stay, a limited stay is necessary here to ensure appropriate consideration of the serious legal issues. As the Ninth Circuit stated in its Remand Order, and as this Court highlighted in its Order Directing Briefing: “the result in this case should not be driven

1 by compromise nor by the State’s deadlines superimposed on the district court’s already pending  
 2 review of the new execution protocol.” The First Amendment issues raised by PNS are serious  
 3 ones, and the Ninth Circuit has previously affirmed the preliminary injunction of an execution on  
 4 the basis of similar First Amendment concerns. *See* Krishnan Declaration,<sup>1</sup> Ex. A (Order of  
 5 District Court, Hon. Vaugh R. Walker, issuing preliminary injunction in *CFAC*); *CFAC II*, 299  
 6 F.3d at 871-872 (noting affirmance of Judge Walker’s preliminary injunction). Moreover, PNS  
 7 submits with this pleading evidence that strongly supports its First Amendment claim, given the  
 8 preliminary and highly expedited nature of this proceeding. A stay of execution is necessary to  
 9 ensure that an unconstitutional execution does not go forward while the Court and the parties  
 10 complete the factual record and necessary legal analysis.

## 11 II. FACTS

12 Executions by lethal injection are currently governed by the California Department of  
 13 Corrections and Rehabilitation (“CDCR”) regulations found at California Code of Regulations  
 14 Title 15, sections 3349 *et seq.* These regulations provide for execution by injection of three  
 15 drugs, in order: sodium pentothal, pancuronium bromide, and potassium chloride. 15 C.C.R.  
 16 §3349.4.5(g)(5). Under O.P. 770, the predecessor to the current protocol, the same three drugs  
 17 were administered in the same order. Krishnan Decl., Ex. B (Initial Statement of Reasons) at 1.

18 When issuing the new regulations, CDCR’s only stated justifications for continuing to  
 19 use the “three-drug cocktail” were made in reference to O.P. 770. Krishnan Decl., Ex. B (Initial  
 20 Statement of Reasons) at 1 (identifying the reasons for using sodium pentothal under the prior  
 21 protocol, O.P. 770) & 2 (failing to give any other reasons for use of the three-drug protocol).  
 22 The stated purpose for using sodium pentothal is to “induce unconsciousness.” *Id.* at 1. The  
 23 stated purpose for using pancuronium bromide is to “induce paralysis and cause breathing to  
 24 cease.” *Id.* And the stated purpose for using potassium chloride is “to induce cardiac arrest.” *Id.*

25 But as this Court learned during the evidentiary hearing in *Morales*, neuromuscular

26 \_\_\_\_\_  
 27 <sup>1</sup> “Krishnan Declaration” or “Krishnan Decl.” refers to the Declaration of Ajay S. Krishnan in  
 28 Support of Statement of Pacific News Service in Response to Court’s Order Directing Briefing,  
 filed herewith.

1 blocking agents like pancuronium “block the activity of voluntary muscles.” Krishnan Decl., Ex.  
2 C (Concannon testimony) at 262-63. In the animal euthanasia context, “you run the risk of a  
3 veterinary patient who is aware, yet when you look at them, they don’t appear to be conscious.”  
4 *Id.* In the context of a three-drug execution protocol, there is the risk that the inmate will suffer  
5 from an “intense excruciating burning sensation” after the administration of potassium chloride,  
6 but would not be able to scream out in pain, because he would be paralyzed. Krishnan Decl., Ex.  
7 C (Heath testimony) at 452-53.

8 The Court also learned during proceedings in *Morales* that pancuronium bromide is  
9 unnecessary when used with the other two drugs for either causing death or hastening death.  
10 *First*, pancuronium has no anesthetic properties, and it is the fast-acting potassium chloride that,  
11 as a practical matter, causes death. *Id.* at 446-47 (Heath testimony). *Second*, pancuronium is  
12 simply not necessary because sodium pentothal can be delivered in a sufficiently high dose to  
13 cause death. *Id.* at 461-62. The Court is familiar with the one-drug execution protocols in  
14 Washington and Ohio and with news accounts that executions carried out under those protocols  
15 proceeded quickly and safely. Indeed, the State has essentially conceded that pancuronium is  
16 unnecessary by agreeing in the last week to proceed with an execution of Mr. Brown using only  
17 sodium thiopental.

18 Not only did the State fail to justify the inclusion of pancuronium bromide in the new  
19 regulations, but it purposefully omitted its true motivations for continuing to employ the three-  
20 drug protocol: to make the death process appear more peaceful. When officials from CDCR, the  
21 Attorney General’s office, and the Governor’s office met in March 2006 to discuss amending  
22 O.P. 770, they discussed the “cosmetic” purpose of pancuronium bromide. Krishnan Decl., Ex.  
23 F (Singler testimony) at 1074-76. Specifically, Dr. Singler, the state’s expert, testified in  
24 *Morales* that, at that meeting, there was a discussion of the “death rattle” that occurs during  
25 executions, and that pancuronium bromide could eliminate that “visibly disturbing  
26 phenomenon.” *Id.* at 1077. Singler also testified in *Morales* that during the “ugly” event of  
27 hypoxia—which occurs when breathing stops—patients start “gurgling” and “sputtering,” and  
28 ultimately, there is an “agonal gasp or an occasional—an involuntary effort as some part of the

1 body or the brain stem tries to—tries to rescue itself.” *Id.*, Ex. E at 1016-18. Preventing the  
 2 public and the press from witnessing the “death rattle” was one of the State’s true, non-public  
 3 reasons for using pancuronium bromide.<sup>2</sup>

4 CDCR seeks refuge in the Supreme Court’s decision in *Baze* to justify its three-drug  
 5 protocol. CDCR stated:

6 in developing this proposed regulation, the CDCR was guided by the United  
 7 States Supreme Court’s decision in *Baze v. Rees* (2008) \_U.S.\_, 128 S.Ct. 1520,  
 8 which held that the State of Kentucky’s lethal injection process, and the  
 administration of the three-chemicals, did not constitute cruel and unusual  
 punishment under the Eighth Amendment.

9 Krishnan Decl., Ex. B at 2. Indeed, when specifically pressed by public comments on the use of  
 10 pancuronium bromide as a “chemical curtain” to shield the press and the public from the  
 11 unvarnished death process, CDCR stated: “The United States Supreme Court in *Baze v. Rees*  
 12 (2008) 553 U.S. 35 upheld the use of the three chemicals, including pancuronium bromide,  
 13 identified in these regulations.” *Id.*, Ex. G at 42. But *Baze* did not involve a First Amendment  
 14 challenge. The Supreme Court’s decision, therefore, provides no justification for the use of  
 15 pancuronium bromide in the face of a First Amendment challenge.

16 Ultimately, the press and the public, who view executions under the new protocol, simply  
 17 will not be able to meaningfully watch and understand what is taking place, because  
 18 pancuronium bromide suppresses this information. Accordingly, in the context of both O.P. 770  
 19 and the current regulations, pancuronium bromide is a chemical curtain. It prevents execution  
 20 witnesses from seeing what is really happening during an execution. Pancuronium bromide  
 21 serves no legitimate functional or penological purpose during an execution, such as anesthetizing  
 22 the inmate or hastening his death. Defendants know this, but nonetheless continue to use  
 23 pancuronium bromide. Therefore, Defendants *intentionally* use pancuronium bromide to conceal  
 24

25 <sup>2</sup> In the new regulations and in the new execution chamber, CDCR took additional steps to  
 26 hinder the press and the public’s right to meaningfully witness executions: (1) the new  
 27 regulations state that the microphone in the execution chamber will be turned off after the inmate  
 28 makes his final statement, such that any sounds that accompany the execution process will not be  
 heard, *see* C.C.R. § 3349.4.5(f)(5); and (2) the viewing rooms constructed as part of the new  
 chamber have sight lines that will make it virtually impossible for the press to view the family  
 witnesses as the execution is taking place.

1 socially important information from the press and the public.

### 2 III. ARGUMENT

3 **A. The use of pancuronium bromide in California’s lethal injection protocol—both**  
 4 **under the current regulations and under O.P. 770—is unconstitutional because it**  
 5 **suppresses First Amendment-protected information for no legitimate penological**  
 6 **purpose.**

7 This case involves the application of the First Amendment right to attend and witness  
 8 important public proceedings in the context of an execution. That right was established in  
 9 *Richmond Newspapers v. Virginia*, 448 U.S. 555 (1980). This presumptive right of access to  
 10 government proceedings now attaches to virtually every phase of the criminal and civil justice  
 11 process, to executive proceedings, and to executions inside prisons. The primary purpose of  
 12 this First Amendment access right is “[t]o ensure that [the] constitutionally protected ‘discussion  
 13 of government affairs’ is an informed one.” *Globe Newspaper Co. v. Superior Court*, 457 U.S.  
 14 596, 605 (1982).

15 Courts employ a two-step analysis to determine whether a restriction on access to a  
 16 particular government proceeding violates the First Amendment. *Press-Enterprise Co. v.*  
 17 *Superior Court*, 478 U.S. 1, 9-10 (1986) (“*Press-Enterprise II*”). *First*, the First Amendment  
 18 right of access must attach to the proceeding. *Id.* *Second*, if the First Amendment access right  
 19 does attach, the restriction must survive a First Amendment balancing test: the legitimate  
 20 governmental interests it serves must outweigh the loss of First Amendment values. *Id.*

21 To demonstrate a violation of the First Amendment right of access, PNS must show (1)  
 22 that the First Amendment right of access attaches to executions, and (2) that the state’s practice  
 23 of paralyzing death row inmates fails the appropriate First Amendment balancing test. PNS  
 24 satisfies both prongs of this test. The first prong is directly controlled and established by *CFAC*  
 25 *II*, a decision that binds this Court. The second prong is clearly satisfied, given the evidence that  
 26 that pancuronium bromide serves no legitimate purpose during an execution and that the state  
 27 intentionally paralyzes inmates in order to conceal socially important information from the  
 28 public and press.

1           **1.       CFAC II has already decided as a matter of law that the First Amendment**  
 2           **access right attaches to executions.**

3           CFAC II held that the press and the public have a right to meaningfully observe  
 4           executions “from the moment the condemned enters the execution chamber through, to and  
 5           including, the time the condemned is declared dead.” CFAC II, 299 F.3d at 885-86 (citations  
 6           omitted). This holding, on its face, satisfies the first step of the two-step analysis performed in  
 7           First Amendment right-of-access cases.

8           Importantly, CFAC II’s reasons for extending the First Amendment right of access to  
 9           executions are particularly relevant in the context of PNS’s claim. CFAC II’s holding rested on  
 10          three considerations:

- 11           1.       the developing body of case law recognizing the First Amendment right of  
 12           access to most aspects of the criminal justice system, including trials, pre- and  
 13           post-trial proceedings, and prisons;
- 14           2.       the historical tradition of public access to executions, from Twelfth  
 15           century England to the modern American practice; and
- 16           3.       the functional importance of public access to executions, namely its  
 17           contribution to public dialogue on the humaneness of the death penalty and the  
 18           appearance of fairness that public access fosters.

19          CFAC II, 299 F.3d at 874-77.

20          The primary type of information to which PNS seeks access is the indicia of pain that an  
 21          inmate manifests during the killing process (not merely indicia of pain during the “initial  
 22          procedures,” which were at issue in CFAC). This is precisely the type of information in which  
 23          there is historical and functional interest. As the District Court stated in CFAC:

24           Courts evaluating the constitutionality of methods of execution rely in part on  
 25           eyewitness testimony. *See, e.g., Jones v. Butterworth*, 695 So. 2d 679 (Fla. 1997);  
 26           *Sims v. Florida*, 2000 WL 193226 at \*7-8 (Fla. 2000); *Fierro v. Gomez*, 865 F.  
 27           Supp. 1387 (N.D. Cal. 1994). This eyewitness testimony is crucial to the review  
 28           of execution protocols which the courts frequently undertake. While courts rarely  
 invalidate a state’s execution procedure, ongoing challenges and threats of  
 challenge motivate states to modify their procedures. For example, lethal gas and  
 electrocution have been vigorously challenged in recent years. In response to  
 these challenges, most states have either moved to the use of lethal injection or  
 make it available as an alternative to gas, electrocution or hanging. *See, e.g.,*  
*Bryan v. Moore*, 120 S. Ct. 1003 (2000) (certiorari to determine constitutionality  
 of electrocution dismissed as improvident after state modified statute to permit  
 execution by lethal injection); *Rupe v. Wood*, 93 F.3d 1434 (9th Cir. 1996)  
 (constitutionality of hanging a 400-pound man rendered moot after state modified  
 statute to permit lethal injection).



1 CFAC, 2000 WL 33173913 at \*9 (N.D. Cal. 2000), aff'd, 299 F.3d 868 (9th Cir. 2002).

2 PNS seeks access to precisely the type of important information that motivated the CFAC  
3 court to recognize the right of access to executions in the first place: information about pain that  
4 the inmate may experience as a result of the execution process. Thus, the importance of the type  
5 of information PNS seeks is a key consideration.

6 **2. Defendants' use of pancuronium bromide to conceal important information**  
7 **from the public cannot survive the First Amendment balancing test.**

8 Given that the First Amendment access right attaches to executions, the only remaining  
9 question is whether the particular challenged restriction survives First Amendment scrutiny. The  
10 restriction at issue here is CDCR's use of pancuronium bromide to paralyze the inmate's body so  
11 as to conceal from the public possible manifestations of pain or other important information.

12 In the prison context, courts typically use the four-factor balancing test of *Turner v.*  
13 *Safley*, 482 U.S. 78 (1987), to evaluate whether an asserted constitutional right outweighs the  
14 legitimate penological interests of the prison. *See CFAC II*, 299 F.3d at 877-79; *Walker v.*  
15 *Sumner*, 917 F.2d 382, 385-86 (9th Cir. 1990); *Whitmire v. Arizona*, 298 F.3d 1134, 1136 (9th  
16 Cir. 2002). Courts use the *Turner* test because it is deferential to prison officials, who face  
17 "complex and intractable" problems of prison administration that are not easily resolved by  
18 judicial decree. *CFAC II*, 299 F.3d at 877-78 (quoting *Procunier v. Martinez*, 416 U.S. 396,  
19 404-05 (1974)). The *Turner* test itself lays out those "legitimate policies and goals of the  
20 corrections system" that fall within the special province or expertise of prison officials:  
21 "deterrence of future crime, protection of society by quarantining criminal offenders,  
22 rehabilitation of those offenders and preservation of internal security." *Id.* at 878 (citing *Pell v.*  
23 *Procunier*, 417 U.S. 817, 822-23 (1974)).

24 With those "legitimate penological objectives" defined, the *Turner* test states: "in  
25 reviewing a challenge to a prison regulation that burdens fundamental rights, [courts] are  
26 directed to ask whether the regulation is reasonably related to legitimate penological objectives,  
27 or whether it represents an exaggerated response to those concerns." *Id.* (internal quotations  
28 omitted) (quoting *Turner*, 482 U.S. at 87). More specifically:

1 In determining whether a restriction on the exercise of rights is reasonable or  
2 exaggerated in light of those penological interests, four factors are relevant: (1)  
3 whether there is a valid, rational connection between the prison regulation and the  
4 legitimate governmental interest put forward to justify it; (2) whether there are  
5 alternative means of exercising the right that remain open to prison inmates; (3)  
6 what impact accommodation of the asserted constitutional rights will have on  
7 guards and other inmates, and on the allocation of prison resources generally and  
8 (4) whether there exist ready alternatives that fully accommodate the prisoner's  
9 rights at de minimis cost to valid penological interests.

10 *Id.* (internal quotations omitted) (quoting *Turner*, 482 U.S. at 89-91).

11 Two important observations should be made about the first prong of the *Turner v. Safley*  
12 test. *First*, if the government has an illegitimate purpose of concealing information from the  
13 public, it automatically fails the balancing test. *CFAC II*, 299 F.3d at 880. *Second*, if there is no  
14 “legitimate governmental interest” that justifies the restriction on fundamental rights, there is no  
15 need for further analysis because there is nothing against which to weigh the infringement of the  
16 plaintiff’s rights. *Id.* at 883 (“the first factor is arguably dispositive.”); *see also Walker*, 917 F.2d  
17 at 385 (“The first of these factors constitutes a sine qua non.”).

18 Defendants’ practice of paralyzing inmates during executions clearly fails this test for  
19 three reasons. *First*, Defendants have not asserted any legitimate basis for using pancuronium  
20 bromide, and as such, the First Amendment interests outweigh any potential penological interest.  
21 *Second*, there is substantial evidence in the record that the government’s *purpose* in using  
22 pancuronium bromide is to suppress information, which is an independent basis for invalidating  
23 the protocol. *Third*, there are readily available alternatives to the three-drug protocol that come  
24 at a de minimis cost to any state interest, and as such, California’s protocol fails the fourth prong  
25 of the *Turner* test.

26 *First*, the reasons that CDCR submits for using pancuronium lack any evidentiary basis.  
27 The first justification that CDCR asserts for its use of pancuronium is to “induce paralysis and  
28 cause breathing to cease.” Krishnan Decl., Ex. B at 1 (Initial Statement of Reasons). Of course,  
inducing paralysis, in and of itself, is not a legitimate purpose in an execution. CDCR must  
therefore be focused on the cessation of breathing. But there is ample evidence that  
pancuronium bromide does not do that, and at the least, is not needed to do that. Dr. Heath has  
testified, based on his analysis of past California execution logs, that it is the potassium chloride

1 that causes death “in the great majority” of cases. *Id.*, Ex. C at 446-47. And the state would be  
2 hard-pressed to point to *any* California execution for which it could reliably say that  
3 pancuronium bromide actually caused death. Indeed, if the State executed an inmate by using  
4 pancuronium bromide, the death would have been caused by suffocation, which would likely be  
5 unconstitutional on Eighth Amendment grounds. *Id.*, Ex. D at 552-53.

6 Of course, to the extent that California uses pancuronium because the Supreme Court  
7 affirmed the use of a three-drug protocol in *Baze*, Defendants effectively admit that there is no  
8 state interest justifying the use of the drug. To suggest that California can suppress First  
9 Amendment information because the Supreme Court held that Kentucky’s protocol does not  
10 violate the Eighth Amendment simply defies logic. *Baze* did not even purport to address any  
11 First Amendment concerns. Moreover, the fundamental focus in *Baze* was on whether sodium  
12 pentothal was administered properly—as the plaintiff there had conceded that if sodium  
13 pentothal were properly administered, there would be no Eighth Amendment violation. 553 U.S.  
14 at 49. As such, the *Baze* Court had no reason to evaluate the effect of pancuronium bromide, let  
15 alone Kentucky’s reasons for using it. Finally, there is no case law suggesting that a valid  
16 penological justification for suppressing speech is that other states have similar policies.

17 Thus, there is simply no valid penological basis for using pancuronium. For this reason  
18 alone, California’s current lethal injection protocol is unconstitutional.

19 *Second*, on this record, there is substantial evidence that California intentionally uses  
20 pancuronium to suppress information, which is an improper purpose that renders the protocol  
21 unconstitutional. If the government has an illegitimate purpose of concealing information from  
22 the public, it automatically fails the balancing test. *CFAC II*, 299 F.3d at 880. CDCR admits—  
23 even in its public statement of reasons—that one purpose of pancuronium is to paralyze the  
24 inmate. And there is evidence that while developing the protocol, Defendants chose to retain  
25 pancuronium bromide in the protocol because it eliminated the “death rattle” that would be  
26 perceived by witnesses as “visibly disturbing.” Finally, given California’s continued insistence  
27 on using pancuronium bromide despite the availability of a one-drug protocol, the only  
28 conclusion to draw is that California intentionally uses pancuronium bromide to suppress First

1 Amendment-protected information gathering. This is an independent basis for finding the  
2 protocol unconstitutional.

3 *Third*, California’s lethal injection protocol fails the fourth prong of the *Turner* test  
4 because there are readily available alternatives that accommodate the First Amendment right at a  
5 *de minimis* cost to the state’s interests. There is substantial evidence that the state can execute  
6 inmates without pancuronium bromide. *See* Krishnan Decl., Ex. C (Heath testimony) at 461-62.  
7 Other states, namely Washington and Ohio perform executions without pancuronium bromide,  
8 and the State has not pointed to any concerns with those executions. And finally, the State has  
9 submitted multiple pleadings to this Court in the last week stating that if Albert Brown elected a  
10 one-drug protocol, the State would be able to fashion an appropriate procedure. Thus, there is no  
11 evidence that pancuronium bromide is needed to cause death—particularly when the state has  
12 admitted that both of the other drugs in the protocol are independently lethal.

13 For these reasons, California’s use of pancuronium bromide in its lethal injection  
14 protocol violates the First Amendment right to meaningfully witness executions.<sup>3</sup>

15 **B. *Baze v. Rees* does not preclude PNS’s claim.**

16 The question in *Baze* was whether Kentucky’s lethal-injection protocol violated the  
17 Eighth Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment; none of the five opinions even  
18 mentions the First Amendment, much less analyzes whether or not the state’s protocol might  
19 violate the public’s right to observe the execution. Cases are not authority for issues not  
20 presented. *Espinosa v. United Student Aid Funds, Inc.*, 553 F.3d 1193, 1199 n. 3 (9th Cir.2008);  
21 *see Central Virginia Community College v. Katz*, 546 U.S. 356, 363 (2006) (citing *Cohens v.*  
22 *Virginia*, 6 Wheat. 264, 5 L.Ed. 257 (1821)). And the standards for evaluating a protocol under  
23 the two amendments are not the same: Under the Eighth Amendment, the burden is on the  
24 prisoner to establish that the protocol “creates a demonstrated risk of severe pain.” 553 U.S. at

25 \_\_\_\_\_  
26 <sup>3</sup> To be clear, PNS takes no position on what an appropriate lethal injection protocol would or  
27 should look like, nor does PNS take any position on whether simply removing pancuronium  
28 bromide from the protocol would result in an otherwise valid method of execution. PNS’s only  
argument is that on the record, the use of pancuronium in the context of California’s current  
protocol is unconstitutional.

1 61. As discussed above, a First Amendment challenge involves determining whether there are  
 2 substantial and legitimate penological interests that outweigh the First Amendment interest in  
 3 access to information, and determining whether there are ready alternatives that accommodate the  
 4 right to information at *de minimis* cost to valid penological interests.

5 Although the *Baze* plurality does refer to the government's "interest in preserving the  
 6 dignity of the procedure, especially where convulsions or seizures could be misperceived as sign  
 7 of consciousness or distress," the factual record developed in the Kentucky trial court suggested  
 8 that pancuronium served two purposes: to prevent "involuntary physical movements during  
 9 unconsciousness that may accompany the injection of potassium chloride" and to "hasten[]  
 10 death." 553 U.S. at 58-59 (citing to record). Here, the factual record strongly suggests that  
 11 pancuronium bromide does not cause or hasten death but is used instead to sanitize the realities  
 12 that arise from a state-sanctioned execution. A stay is warranted to prevent the State from  
 13 carrying out an execution in a manner inconsistent with the First Amendment.

14 **C. Given the Ninth Circuit's guidance and the procedural posture of this case, a limited  
 15 stay is appropriate here.**

16 *Nelson v. Campbell* discusses two procedural aspects relating to stays of execution:  
 17 whether certain claims should be raised in habeas petitions rather than civil actions under § 1983,  
 18 and the impact of delay. 541 U.S. at 648-50. The first of these is irrelevant to this suit, because  
 19 PNS is not a prisoner. As to the second, PNS has not engaged in *any* delay, much less the  
 20 decade-long "abusive delay" and "last-minute attempts to manipulate the judicial process" at  
 21 issue in *Nelson*.

22 During the four years that this suit has been pending, this Court has consistently made it  
 23 clear that, given the grave issues and consequences involved in Mr. Morales's Eighth  
 24 Amendment claims, that case would be resolved first, with PNS soon to follow. Until the end of  
 25 last month, California had no execution protocol in place, and until less than two weeks ago a  
 26 state court had enjoined the government from implementing its new protocol until the court had  
 27 examined it for compliance with the state Administrative Procedures Act. Until the state insisted  
 28 on setting an execution date for Mr. Brown—and setting it for the earliest possible date under

1 state law—PNS, like this Court, had understood that the government would not resume  
 2 executions until this Court had had an opportunity to review Mr. Morales’s, and then PNS’s,  
 3 claims. PNS is now ready to move forward according to the schedule outlined by the Court at  
 4 last Tuesday’s status conference, a schedule that will allow this Court to reach the merits of the  
 5 First Amendment claim before, it now appears, the state will even be in a position to proceed  
 6 with another execution.

7 *Nelson* invokes equitable principles, and those principles apply equally to both sides.  
 8 *Nelson* had failed to act “at such a time as to allow consideration of the merits [of the case]  
 9 without requiring entry of a stay,” and the Court held that against him. Here, it is the  
 10 government that, in its haste to execute somebody before its drugs expire, has made it impossible  
 11 for this Court to consider the First Amendment problems with its execution protocol, as well as  
 12 the extent to which the CDCR has addressed the problems with that protocol that this Court  
 13 discussed in its 2006 opinion. *Nelson’s* “strong equitable presumption” thus runs against  
 14 government. Moreover, it is well established that the violation of the First Amendment right to  
 15 meaningfully witness an execution would constitute irreparable harm to PNS and would be  
 16 against the public interest. *Klein v. City of San Clemente*, 584 F.3d 1196, 1207-08 (2009).

#### 17 IV. CONCLUSION

18 For the foregoing reasons, PNS respectfully requests that the Court stay the execution of  
 19 Albert Greenwood Brown.

20  
 21 Dated: September 28, 2010

ACLU FOUNDATION OF  
 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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