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**Nationally Renowned African-American Leaders from NC
Call on Gov. Easley and Speakers Black and Morgan
to Push for Moratorium Vote**

RALEIGH – Nine prominent African-American leaders in North Carolina, led by internationally acclaimed historian John Hope Franklin, today called on Governor Mike Easley and House Speakers Jim Black and Richard Morgan to do all in their power to ensure that the State House of Representatives debate and vote on legislation to suspend executions for two years.

“The recent highly-publicized exonerations demonstrate North Carolina’s system of capital punishment is flawed and in need of careful study and reform,” Franklin said in a letter to Easley, Black, and Morgan.

The State Senate passed a moratorium bill last year and it has been in the House Rules Committee since then, despite having the support of a majority of members of the House and widespread public support across the state.

The letter does not ask Easley, Black, and Morgan to personally support the moratorium. It urges them to make sure that the democratic process is allowed to work and that the issue receives the fair hearing it deserves.

“These extraordinary people have spent their entire lives fighting for civil rights, justice and fairness for all of North Carolina’s citizens,” said David Neal, spokesperson for the NC Coalition for a Moratorium. “Our elected officials need to listen to these powerful voices and allow the people’s representatives to vote on a moratorium this session.”

The letter comes on the heels of pleas from eight former North Carolina Supreme Court Justices; The NC Black Leadership Caucus, The Legislative Black Caucus, the NAACP of NC, and the Triangle Urban League; 34 state religious leaders; and 21 murder victims’ family members for the House leadership to allow the moratorium bill to come to a vote this session.

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