

**Supreme Court Issues Temporary Stay of Execution for
Stephen Michael West
November 6 , 2010**

Nashville, Tenn. – The Tennessee Supreme Court today entered an order postponing the execution of Stephen Michael West from November 9 to November 30.

The Court acted on a motion to appeal from the Davidson County Chancery Court, where West filed a lawsuit challenging Tennessee’s three-drug legal injection protocol. In the suit, West alleges that prisoners executed using this method experience unconstitutionally severe pain because the first drug, sodium thiopental, does not render the prisoner completely unconscious before the final two drugs are administered.

Because evidence has not yet been presented regarding this claim, the Supreme Court has remanded the case to Davidson County Chancery Court for an immediate hearing to make a decision regarding West’s claim. In the order, the Court notes that “decisions involving such profoundly important and sensitive issues . . . are best decided on evidence that has been presented, tested, and weighed in an adversarial hearing.”