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## Arizonans must seek truth about executions

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Without transparency in government, those in power fall prey to corruption and incompetence. This fact is epitomized by the Arizona Department of Corrections' decision to hire Dr. Alan Doerhoff — the only doctor ever to be banned by a federal court from participating in executions — to administer the state's lethal injections.

Thanks to recent investigative news reports, Arizonans know why the department wanted to keep Doerhoff's involvement in executions secret. Doerhoff is dyslexic and has testified that he sometimes confuses dosages during lethal injections. He has been barred from practicing medicine in two Missouri hospitals and has been sued for malpractice more than 20 times. Doerhoff was ultimately banned from participating in Missouri executions once these facts were made public.

If Doerhoff wasn't good enough for Missouri, why would he be good enough for Arizona?

For decades, the department has carried out virtually every aspect of lethal-injection executions outside of public view and without legislative or executive oversight. It is time for the shroud of secrecy to be lifted. Doerhoff's hiring raises serious concerns about the department's judgment, extending beyond the qualifications and training of those carrying out lethal injections.

With these new revelations, the courts should scrutinize all aspects of Arizona's lethal-injection procedures and the decision-making behind them. Employing a medical professional who is trained and qualified to carry out lethal injections should be the minimum of the department's responsibility. Incredibly, the department has failed that basic test.

Arizonans have a right to know about the qualifications and training of those carrying out executions in their name. But, more broadly, it is time for a fuller disclosure of the procedures that execution teams follow and the reasons why the procedures are designed the way they are.

Even the lawyers who are challenging the lethal-injection protocols that their clients will face are not granted access to this information.

While Arizona's decision to hire Doerhoff was indefensible, the state is not alone in secretly assigning critical tasks to underqualified individuals.

Across the country, responsibility for creating and implementing lethal-injection procedures is often casually delegated to prison employees without discussion, meaningful study or oversight by elected representatives.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court dodged the broader issues of government secrecy when it approved Kentucky's lethal-injection procedures earlier this year in *Baze v. Rees*. In that case, the Court upheld Kentucky's protocols because the record showed that reasonably competent people were performing key aspects of the executions. The same cannot be said for Arizona.

We must hold our government accountable, especially when it comes to the state executing fellow citizens in our name. As such, Arizonans should demand an official inquiry into the secret hiring process that put an individual like Doerhoff on the state payroll.

More broadly, the disclosures about Doerhoff strongly suggest that it is time for a moratorium on executions until these matters are sorted out and opened to public review.

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