

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 9, 2008

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**WHAT:** J.L. TURNER LEGAL ASSOCIATION BACK'S DALLAS COUNTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CALL FOR PENALTIES FOR  
INTENTIONAL PROSECUTORIAL MISCONDUCT

**WHEN:** May 9, 2008

J.L. TURNER LEGAL ASSOCIATION BACK'S DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT  
ATTORNEY'S CALL FOR PENALTIES FOR INTENTIONAL PROSECUTORIAL  
MISCONDUCT

President Steve Bolden announced today that the J.L. Turner Legal Association, The African-American Bar Association of Dallas ("JLTLA") supports recent comments by Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins in which he endorsed sanctions – possibly even jail time – for prosecutors who intentionally withhold evidence.

"The actions of the prosecutors highlighted by the Dallas Morning News article on May 4<sup>th</sup> undermine the credibility of our criminal justice system. Intentionally hiding evidence that could prove a person's innocence not only violates the U.S. Supreme Court case *Brady v. Maryland*, but smacks of the sorts of antics in Communist era 'show trials.' It's not American and it makes a mockery of our criminal justice system."

Texas accounts for 14 percent of the estimated 216 DNA-based exonerations around the nation. Dallas County leads all local jurisdictions with 17 exonerations from genetic testing.

"District Attorney Watkins has taken a stance that may not be popular among prosecutors and some segments of the legal community. Nonetheless, the District Attorney's stance epitomizes public service over self interest. That is precisely why we support the calls by District Attorney Watkins and State Sen. Rodney Ellis (Houston) for harsh penalties for intentional prosecutorial misconduct."

"As lawyers, we recognize that sending innocent people to jail, if not to the death chamber, is wrong. And as gatekeepers of our profession, we cannot sit idly by and watch grave injustices being perpetrated by members of our noble profession."

Mr. Bolden says that JLTLA will also work with other organizations to garner support on this important policy issue. "I believe the citizens of Dallas and across Texas will be upset to learn that when a regular person files a false police report, or when a police officer plants evidence, they can both be brought up on charges and go to jail - but when there is intentional prosecutorial misconduct, virtually nothing happens. Surely, that can't be justice."

The JLTLA was organized in 1952, and is the African-American Bar Association of Dallas. It is an affiliate of the National Bar Association, the oldest and largest national association of African-American and minority attorneys, jurists, legal scholars, and law students in the world.