

U.S. lethal injection hearings begin

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Whether the use of lethal injections on death row inmates is cruel and inhumane was before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington. The administration of a series of three drugs to execute prisoners is being challenged by two Kentucky death row inmates who claim it is cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Whether executions overall are constitutional isn't being debated before the court Monday, The Chicago Tribune reported from Washington. Rather, the question is whether the combination of chemicals unnecessary pain and suffering and if it should be adjusted to produce a more efficient poison. The lawsuits were filed after two executions in 2006 were reported. The first was of Angel Diaz in Florida, who took more than 20 minutes to die. The second was Joseph Clark in Ohio, who doctors said was conscious for more than an hour before dying. A total of 37 states use lethal injection in carrying out death penalties.

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