

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE SUPREME COURT

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Dec 19 2025

S.C. SUPREME COURT

Appeal from the Spartanburg County
Court of Common Pleas

Appellate Case No. 2025-001377

RICKY LEE BLACKWELL PETITIONER,

v.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINARESPONDENT.

MOTION FOR SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL

The undersigned, Lindsey S. Vann and Rosalind S.D. Major, respectfully move this Court for substitution of counsel for Petitioner, Ricky Lee Blackwell. In support of this motion, the undersigned submit the following:

Petitioner was convicted and sentenced to death in Spartanburg County. This Court affirmed Petitioner’s convictions and death sentence. *State v. Blackwell*, 420 S.C. 127, 801 S.E.2d 713 (2017).

On March 12, 2018, Petitioner filed a timely application for post-conviction relief (“PCR”) in the Spartanburg County Court of Common Pleas. This Court assigned the case to the Honorable Daniel D. Hall who appointed Lindsey S. Vann and Charles Grose to represent Petitioner. Rosalind S.D. Major, an attorney who works with Ms. Vann at Justice 360, began assisting with pre-hearing preparation and testimony preparation in November 2022. Ms. Major appeared as pro bono counsel on Petitioner’s post-hearing briefing.

Following an evidentiary hearing, Judge Hall denied Petitioner's capital PCR action in full. Petitioner timely filed a motion to alter or amend judgment, which Judge Hall denied. Petitioner timely filed a Notice of Appeal before this Court. On September 10, 2025, this Court appointed Lindsey S. Vann and Rosalind S.D. Major to represent Petitioner in this appeal. On December 4, 2025, counsel for Petitioner notified this Court that all transcripts had been obtained in this matter.

Attorney Vann is leaving Justice 360 and the practice of law at the end of 2025. As a result, she will no longer be able to represent Petitioner in this matter. Undersigned counsel respectfully request that this Court relieve Attorney Vann in this case and appoint Brianna L. Cruz in her place. Attorney Cruz works with Ms. Major at Justice 360 and has become well-acquainted with the transcript of Petitioner's evidentiary hearing and subsequent pleadings. Ms. Cruz additionally has been assisting on Petitioner's case since 2024, including assisting with drafting the motion to amend or alter judgment. As a result, Ms. Cruz is already familiar with the trial, appeal, and PCR record and it would be most efficient to substitute her in place of Ms. Vann. Undersigned counsel will take care to avoid duplicating efforts in Petitioner's PCR appeal.

Undersigned counsel discussed their request for substitution with counsel for Respondent who indicated the State takes no position on the issue of substitution of counsel.

CONCLUSION

Respectfully, undersigned counsel requests that this Court relieve Ms. Vann as counsel for further proceedings in this matter and this Court substitute Brianna L. Cruz as co-counsel in this matter.

[Signature block appears on the next page.]

Respectfully submitted,

s/ Lindsey S. Vann

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