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Florida Prepares for Record-Breaking Ninth Execution in One Year

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— Categories: Crime



A Florida death row inmate convicted of a brutal 1994 triple murder is scheduled to be executed Thursday evening, marking what would be the highest number of executions in a single year in the state since capital punishment was reinstated in 1976.

Edward Zakrzewski, 60, is set to die by lethal injection at 6 p.m. at Florida State Prison in Starke. His execution will be the ninth carried out in Florida in 2025, surpassing the state's previous high of eight executions in 2014. The current streak of executions has placed

Florida at the top nationally this year, ahead of Texas and South Carolina, which have each carried out four.

Zakrzewski, a former member of the United States Air Force, was sentenced to death for killing his wife and two children in Okaloosa County. The killings took place after his wife, Sylvia, 34, expressed her intention to file for divorce. According to court records, he first attacked Sylvia with a crowbar, then strangled her with a rope. After believing she may have survived, he struck her again with a machete. Their two children, Edward, 7, and Anna, 5, were also killed with the machete.

Authorities said Zakrzewski had previously indicated he would rather kill his family than see his marriage end. His actions left the community and legal system stunned by the sheer violence involved.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, a Republican, signed the death warrant for Zakrzewski, and the U.S. Supreme Court denied his final request for a stay of execution on Wednesday.

While Zakrzewski's execution has moved forward without legal delay, some groups have voiced opposition, pointing to the narrow jury vote at his trial. At the time, the jury recommended a death sentence by a 7-5 vote. Under current Florida law, a unanimous jury vote is required to impose the death penalty, a change implemented years after Zakrzewski's sentencing. The trial judge had ultimately imposed three separate death sentences in the case.

Opponents of the death penalty have drawn attention to Zakrzewski's military background and the fact that modern sentencing rules would not allow the death penalty based on such a divided jury vote. The Action Network, which organized a petition against the execution, encouraged supporters to call Governor DeSantis' office to plead for clemency.

"Florida does not need the death penalty to be safe. This execution will not make us safer; it will simply add another act of violence to an already tragic story. Justice does not require death," reads part of the prepared script shared by the group.

Despite multiple appeals filed over the years, Zakrzewski's legal team has failed to overturn the sentence or delay the execution. His case has remained a fixture in Florida's death penalty system for over two decades.

So far in 2025, 26 executions have taken place nationwide. Eleven more are scheduled across seven states before the end of the year.

Florida has not slowed its pace. Just two weeks ago, on July 15, inmate Michael Bernard Bell was put to death. Governor DeSantis has also signed two more death warrants. The next scheduled execution is for Kayle Bates on August 19, followed by Curtis Windom on August 28. Windom, 59, was convicted of murdering three people in the Orlando area back in 1992.

Florida carries out executions using a three-drug combination: a sedative to render the inmate unconscious, a paralytic to stop muscle movement, and a final drug that stops the heart. The method is administered at the Florida State Prison under the supervision of the Florida Department of Corrections.