**Government: NAACP Brief Questions Name: Date:**

**READ THIS FIRST:**

Interest groups often submit *amicus curiae* briefs (“friend of the court” in Latin) to help justices determine facts or important issues surrounding a case. The court can decide whether or not to use these briefs. Courts often seek amicus curiae briefs from the NAACP for civil rights cases.

You will read an excerpt from an amicus curiae brief submitted to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals by the NAACP. Go to <http://www.naacp.org/pages/amicus-briefs> and click on Marvin Lee Wilson v Rick Thaler. Use pages 10-15 to answer the questions below.

1. Read the NAACP’s “Statement of Interest” on page 10. What is the goal of this interest group?
2. In the “Summary of Argument,” it is expressed that this case deals with executing a mentally retarded individual. What case set the standard for such executions, and what is the standard?
3. The Texas Criminal Court of Appeals does not follow the precedent that was set by the Atkins case. How does the TCCA determine what constitutes “mental retardation,” and why are some interest groups concerned with this?
4. Begin reading the argument. What are the three criterion for determining mental retardation?
5. After reading through the entire excerpt, what specific point is the NAACP trying to explain/present to the court?