

CCV Summer News 2009

June 15, 2009

Special points of interest:

- Take part in California's Day of Action to End the Death Penalty! More information inside
- Create a You Tube video testimonial

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What California Voters Can Learn from New Mexico

On March 18, 2009, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson signed H.B. 285, a bi-partisan bill that replaced the death penalty with permanent imprisonment.



New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson replaces the death penalty with permanent imprisonment.

New Mexico is the fifteenth state to abandon capital punishment and the second state to do so legislatively in the last two years. New Jersey's legislature passed a similar bill in December 2007. At least ten other states have considered similar measures this year citing the significant savings that could result from ending the death penalty: Montana, Ne-

braska, Maryland, Colorado, New Hampshire, and Kansas are among them.

Prior to signing the bill, Governor Bill Richardson's office reportedly heard from thousands of New Mexicans on the bill to repeal the death penalty. They reported that they had received 9413 calls, emails, and walk-in visits on the issue. Of those, the vast majority, 7169, supported repeal of the death penalty and 2244 were opposed.

As is true in all states, the voices of murder victim family members were crucial to the campaign to repeal the death penalty in New Mexico.

Given California's current economic climate, it is time to consider what we are sacrificing for the death penalty and how it affects murder victim family members.

In June 2008, the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice (www.ccfaj.org) found that California annually spends approximately \$137.7 million on the death penalty. By replacing the death penalty with permanent imprisonment,

(NM Death Penalty continued on page 3)

Participate in California's Day of Action to End the Death Penalty!

Your voice is important! Please help us make this Day of Action a huge success!

Join us on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 for a full day of activism to end the death penalty, including:

- * Public hearing to speak out against executions.
- * Procession to the capitol to tell Gov. Schwarzenegger and California legislators to stop wasting money on the death penalty.
- * No-host social hour with leading advocates in the anti-death penalty movement

As seen in NM, the voices of murder victim family members are crucial to the fight against the death penalty. Here's how you can be a part of the Day of Action and make a difference:

1) Attend the hearing and make a public comment.

On June 30, there will be a public hearing to hear comments about the proposed regulations concerning the lethal injection process in CA. Please plan on attending the hearing. We will provide information and tips on what to include in your comment.

The hearing will take place from 9am to 3pm at the Department of Health Services in Sacramento, CA.

2) Submit a written comment to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

We are encouraging as many individuals to submit written comments to the CDCR from **June 15 until June 30**. The CDCR is required by law to review and respond to every written comment.



Please contact Aarti Kelapure (aarti@deathpenalty.org / 415.262.0082) for instructions and tips on public and written comments.

After the hearing, we will proceed to the Capitol to share our view with elected officials.

If you plan to attend the hearing, sign up online - find the link under the

June 30 Day of Action on CCV's News and Events page.

The hearing will be held at:
Department of Health Services
The Auditorium
1500 Capitol Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Share Your Story on YouTube

Looking for a way to get involved? Want to share your story? Want to speak out against the death penalty? Consider making a CCV YouTube video testimonial.

CCV has been collecting video footage of interviews with several murder victim family members. Each person has been able to share his or her individual story and how the experience affected their view on the death penalty.

Over the next few months, CCV will edit the foot-



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age and put together 5-10 minute YouTube video testimonials for each person.

If you haven't shared your story yet and would like to (or even if you already have), CCV encourages you to consider your own video testimonial. This is a great opportunity for those who want to speak out, but are not comfortable with public speaking or writing.

To learn how, contact CCV today.

Save \$1 Billion in 5 Years: Suspend the Death Penalty

An Open Letter to the California State Legislature and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

As you are working on resolving the current budget crisis, consider that California could save \$1 billion in five years, simply by suspending the death penalty and using permanent imprisonment instead. Here's how:

- \$125 million per year in costs for the current death penalty system. According to the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, the annual cost of California's death penalty to the state is \$137 million. If instead the worst offenders were condemned to permanent imprisonment, the cost would be only \$11 million. See www.ccfaj.org/rr-dp-official.html

- \$400 million for construction of new housing facility for death row inmates. According to the State Auditor, this is how much it will cost to build a new facility at San Quentin. Building at any other site will be even more expensive. See www.bsa.ca.gov/reports/summary/2007-120.2

- Any attempt to "speed up" the death penalty

will cost even more. The California Commission concluded that in order to reduce the time needed to review death penalty cases, the state would need to spend an additional \$100 million each year. See www.ccfaj.org/rr-dp-official.html

These figures do not include the potential income from selling San Quentin, something that can only be achieved if the death penalty is suspended. How can we do this?

- Tell the Governor to convert all current death sentences to sentences of life without possibility of parole, ensuring the inmates are never released.

- Temporarily suspend new death sentences for five years, until the state has recovered from the current fiscal crisis.

A full analysis of the costs of the death penalty is available at: www.aclunc.org/deathpenalty.

Sign the petition to "Save \$1 Billion: Suspend the Death Penalty" on Facebook: http://apps.facebook.com/causes/petitions/176?m=dcf26e2b&recruiter_id=5743493

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the Commission noted that the state could save in excess of \$125 million per year. In February 2009, the California State Legislature also doled out an additional \$136 million for a new death row housing facility – for which the total project budget is expected to reach \$400 million.

In California, nearly 25,000 homicides from the past twenty years remain unsolved. Despite this alarming number, due to a continual shortage of funds, there are not nearly enough homicide or cold case investigators in most jurisdictions.

"Right now, we are literally letting thousands of people get away with murder – that is a public safety crisis," said Judy Kerr, Spokesperson and Victim Liaison for California Crime Victims for

Alternative to the Death Penalty. "It seems so obvious that our limited public safety resources would be better spent catching these killers."

With the largest death row in the country and a fiscal emergency on our hands, it is irresponsible for California to continue investing hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in a broken death penalty while so many murders go unsolved.

The death penalty is draining our state and county resources while providing no benefit to our communities. We should be using our scarce public safety resources on getting killers off our streets, not on a symbolic punishment. It is time for California voters to follow New Mexico's example and replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment.

**CALIFORNIA CRIME VICTIMS FOR
ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEATH PENALTY**

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california
Crime Victims
for **Alternatives**
to the Death Penalty

www.CaliforniaCrimeVictims.org

California Crime Victims for Alternatives to the Death Penalty is a coalition of families, friends, and loved ones of murder victims who oppose the death penalty. The coalition supports families, friends, and loved ones in telling their stories and being heard. CCV educates the public about alternatives to the death penalty and provides information, resources, and support to families regardless of their views on the death penalty or whether the perpetrator has been apprehended.

CCV is a joint project of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, Death Penalty Focus, and the ACLU of Northern California.

CCV Staff:

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Upcoming Events and Ways to Get Involved

Alameda County Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (ACCADP)

ACCADP is working to end the use of the death penalty in Alameda County, one of the most aggressive death penalty counties in California. To learn more, **please attend an ACCADP meeting, held the first Thursday of each month, 5:30 - 7:30pm at 1000 Broadway, 5th Floor in Downtown Oakland or visit the website: www.alamedadeathpenalty.org**

Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives (LACCDPA)

LACCDPA is a coalition of organizations focused on reducing death sentencing in Los Angeles County and ending the death penalty in California. If you are interested in joining the fight, **please attend an LACCDPA meeting, held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 6 - 8pm at the ACLU of Southern California, 1313 West Eighth St. in Los Angeles or visit the website: www.enddeathpenaltyla.org**

Visit the CCV Website

Go to www.californiacrimevictims.org to find the lat-

est news, interviews, and upcoming events. You can also take action by sending your county's District Attorney a letter urging him or her to stop seeking death sentences, make a tax-deductible donation, and find a link to add CCV as a friend on Facebook.

COPE Support Group

COPE is an inter-faith group designed to help victim-survivors recover from the depression and illness associated with tragic loss. Every 3rd Saturday from 3 - 5pm at Regeneration, 219 E. 15th Street in Oakland.

For more information, contact Lorrain Taylor of 1,000 Mothers to Prevent Violence at mothers1000@aol.com

The Healing Circle for the Soul Support Group

Every 2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 - 9pm
Paradise Baptist Church, 2nd Floor, 2595 San Jose Ave.
in San Francisco

For more information, contact George Jurand (415.516.1635) or Mattie Scott (415.412.1469)