

Resolution for Repeal of Maryland's Death Penalty



WHEREAS we are a group of Marylanders who, philosophically and morally, both support and oppose the

death penalty. Yet we agree that our state's use of the death penalty over the last two and a half decades has proven capricious, discriminatory, and inequitable.

WHEREAS there is ample evidence that the death penalty is applied in a racist manner:

⇒ In Maryland, black residents make up approximately 28% of the population, yet are the victims of about 80% of homicides annually, and;

⇒ Everyone currently on Maryland's death row was sentenced for the murder of a white victim, and;

⇒ In January 2003, the University of Maryland released a comprehensive study finding that Maryland State's Attorneys are 1.6 times more likely to ask for a death sentence for the murder of a white victim than for a black victim, and;

⇒ This same study found that death is sought twice as often if the defendant is black and the victim white than if both the defendant and victim are black.

WHEREAS Maryland's death penalty is a lottery of geography:

⇒ Baltimore County is responsible for the vast majority of capital prosecution while most Maryland counties never seek the death penalty, and;

⇒ The 2003 University of Maryland study found that while only about 7% of all murders in Maryland annually happen in Baltimore County, the County is more than 13 times more likely to seek the death penalty in an eligible case than is Baltimore City, and more than five and three times more likely than Montgomery and Anne Arundel Counties, respectively.

WHEREAS Maryland's death penalty is not cost effective public policy:

⇒ Most studies estimate that each death sentence costs the State "\$400,000 over and above what it would normally cost to process, and then maintain a prisoner serving a life sentence." (Judge Cathell, Maryland Court of Appeals).

WHEREAS sentiment against the death penalty is growing in Maryland as a February 2005 poll by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research found that 63% of Maryland voters believe that the sentence of life without parole is "an acceptable substitute for the death penalty."

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

calls on the Governor and our representatives to the Maryland Senate and House of Delegates to enact legislation to repeal Maryland's death penalty statutes and, further, enact an immediate moratorium on executions in Maryland until such legislation is ratified into law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Governor and our representatives in the Maryland General Assembly.

Ratified by

(organization's name)

(contact person)

(address)

(city, state, zip)

(email, phone)

Please return ratified copy to:



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