

Abolish the Death Penalty in Texas

WHEREAS Texas leads the country in executions, having put to death 405 people since the death penalty was reinstated, over one third of all US executions, and

WHEREAS there are growing revelations in Texas concerning official misconduct and racial bias by district attorneys, police officers, and court appointed attorneys and serious errors by crime lab technicians that have undermined public confidence in the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, in Texas, juries in capital murder trials have the option to sentence a defendant to life without parole, and

WHEREAS innocent people have been sentenced to death as evidenced by 127 people being exonerated and released from death rows in the US, including eight in Texas, and

WHEREAS, there is credible evidence that as many as three innocent people have been executed in the state of Texas since the death penalty was reinstated, and

WHEREAS the editorial board of the Dallas Morning News re-examined its century-old position on the death penalty and concluded they had "lost confidence that the state of Texas can guarantee that every inmate it executes is truly guilty of murder . . . that is why we believe that Texas should abandon the death penalty -- because we cannot reconcile the fact that it is both imperfect and irreversible," and

WHEREAS there is a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in charging, sentencing and in the of imposition of the death penalty in the US, according to the US General Accounting Office, and

WHEREAS studies also indicate that particularly race of the victim plays a major role in who is sentenced to death in the United States (US: Death by Discrimination - The Continuing Role of Race in Capital Cases, April 2003, The Justice Project) and

WHEREAS Black and Hispanic offenders make up 68% of the current death row population in Texas and the current US Census for Texas indicates that the Black and Hispanic/Latino population of Texas is 46.5% and

WHEREAS there are hundreds of people on death row in Texas who were defended by attorneys whose investigative and expert witness expenses were capped at \$500 and in some rural areas in Texas, lawyers have received no more than \$800 to handle a capital case,
(Statement before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on Fairness, Reliability and Federal Habeas Corpus Procedures July 13, 2005 by Bryan A. Stevenson, Director, Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama.)

WHEREAS after a sentence is passed, a death penalty case costs an average of \$2.3 million, about three times the cost of imprisoning someone in a single cell at the highest security level for 40 years, according to the Dallas Morning News, and

WHEREAS taxpayer money wasted on the death penalty could be used for programs that truly reduce violent crime and for programs that help the victims of crime, and

WHEREAS the death penalty is not seen as a deterrent to murders and in a poll of police chiefs the death penalty was ranked last in ways to reduce violent crime,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the state of Texas abolish the death penalty.

Submitted to and Adopted by Precinct Number _____, _____ County

Precinct Convention Secretary (signature) _____ on _____ (date)

Submitted to and Adopted by State Sen. District _____, _____ County

Sen. District/Co. Secretary (signature) _____ on _____ (date)