



Resolution to End Death Sentencing in Los Angeles County

Whereas the death penalty has been rejected by a large majority of nations and most major religions; the death penalty is not used by 15 of our own states; more than 130 innocent people have been freed from death rows across the U.S. after spending years in prison for crimes they did not commit – some coming within days or hours of execution; and there are racial and geographic disparities in the application of the death penalty;

Whereas death penalty cases cost Los Angeles County taxpayers millions more than permanent incarceration but do not make us safer, while those resources could be better used to solve more crimes, expand and improve services to crime victims, or for other effective public safety programs;

Whereas Los Angeles County sentences more people to death than any other county in California yet has the highest homicide rate in California;

Whereas Los Angeles County, whose cities face severe cuts to the services needed to keep their neighborhoods safe and have had to resort to layoffs and furloughs, could save millions each year by choosing to pursue other alternatives instead of the death penalty and invest resources in proven violence prevention programs;

Believing that it is time for public safety priorities to change in Los Angeles County, we
_____ **(insert organization name), therefore resolve and call on:**

- 1) The District Attorney of Los Angeles County to stop pursuing the death penalty; and
- 2) The District Attorney and the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County to invest in solving homicides, violence prevention, and effective public safety programs.

Organization:

Contact Person:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone & Email:

Date:

Please send completed resolutions to:

LACCDPA

c/o James Clark

1313 West Eighth St.

Los Angeles, CA 90017

Contact: James Clark, jclark@aclu-sc.org, (213) 977-5258

How to Pass a Resolution

It's Time to End the Death Penalty in Los Angeles County

What you don't know about the death penalty may surprise you.

In 2009, Los Angeles County sent more people to death row than any other county in the nation, wasting tens of millions of taxpayer's dollars along the way.

Many people are surprised to learn that sentencing people to execution costs the county far more than permanent imprisonment. A recent report found that a trial seeking execution in California costs at least \$1.1 million *more* than a trial seeking permanent imprisonment, also called "life without parole."¹ In 2009, Los Angeles County taxpayers wasted at least \$14.3 million on the death penalty trials of thirteen defendants. Condemning these same defendants to permanent imprisonment would have cost a fraction of the cost.

All of this taxpayer money is being wasted in Los Angeles, while the county and cities face severe cuts to the services needed to keep neighborhoods safe. County and city agencies have had to resort to layoffs and furloughs and crime labs are shutting down. We could save millions each year by choosing to pursue permanent imprisonment instead of the death penalty and invest these resources in proven violence prevention programs.

Some people are also surprised to learn that since 1973, 138 people have been freed from death row in this country based on evidence that they were in fact innocent. The conviction of innocent people and other problems with the death penalty have led a majority of nations, most major religions, and now 15 states in the U.S. to reject the death penalty.²

Now that we know, what should we do?

The Los Angeles County Coalition for Death Penalty Alternatives asks organizations, religious and community groups to adopt a resolution calling for:

- 1) The District Attorney of Los Angeles County to stop pursuing the death penalty; and
- 2) The District Attorney and the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County to invest in solving homicides, violence prevention, and effective public safety programs.

Attached is a draft resolution. The reasons for adopting the resolution may vary for each group. Thus, groups may modify the preamble ("whereas" statements). We ask that each resolution call for the two solutions stated above.

The Coalition will gather these resolutions to present to county officials. By adopting a resolution, you will be adding your group's voice to the call for change in policy on this critical issue.

The Coalition can provide speakers to address your group, as well as additional fact sheets and background information. For more information, please contact: James Clark, jclark@aclu-sc.org, (213) 977-5258.

¹ See The Hidden Death Tax, a Report by the ACLU-NC, available at: http://www.aclunc.org/docs/criminal_justice/death_penalty/The_Hidden_Death_Tax.pdf

² See Death Penalty Information Center, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org (innocence, religion, world views).