February 2, 2015

All Members of the Delaware General Assembly
Legislative Hall
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

Esteemed members of the 148th General Assembly,

We, the undersigned Delaware Repeal coalition partners, call for full repeal of Delaware’s death penalty before the General Assembly adjourns in July 2015. Together, we represent tens of thousands of Delawareans who believe that the death penalty is the wrong public policy choice for our great state.

Some of us oppose the death penalty for moral reasons. We believe killing is wrong in all circumstances and that the state should not have the power to take a life. Others of us aren’t opposed to the death penalty in theory, but recognize that the system is broken beyond repair. We cannot tolerate the risk of executing even one innocent person when life in prison allows for correction if a mistake is made.

It has been suggested that Delaware should replace the death penalty with life without parole, but carve out an exception for law enforcement. This is not repeal. To reserve the use of capital punishment for crimes perpetrated against any select group—indicating that some lives are more worthy of the ultimate punishment than all others—is a solution that only amplifies the inherent racism, classism and arbitrary nature of the system.

We believe that our criminal justice system should treat all people equally regardless of how much money they make, where they live, or the color of their skin. In reality, that’s not how the death penalty works. The death penalty is applied unevenly and unfairly, even for similar crimes. We all recognize that the criminal justice system has problems with racial bias. Here in Delaware, 73% of the men on death row are African American or Hispanic. The vast majority of people sentenced to die in Delaware could not afford a private defense attorney. There should not be one system of justice for the middle class and wealthy, and another for the poor.
We must also face the financial fact that the death penalty costs the state millions of taxpayer dollars to implement. Approximately 44% of the death sentences handed down in Delaware have been later reduced to life without parole. But that occurs after the money has already been wasted in pursuit of a death sentence. Brendan O’Neill, Delaware’s Public Defender, has calculated that his office spends more than $2 million each year on capital cases alone. The Attorney General’s Office, the courts and the Department of Corrections combined spend millions more. Your constituents would receive more value by diverting those funds into services for families who have lost a loved one to murder, programs that deter crime, and additional resources for law enforcement.

Public opinion supports repeal. 64% of Delawareans polled in February 2012, before the statewide dialogue on repeal of the death penalty even began, believed the appropriate punishment for murder was some form of life without parole. Only 28% percent supported the death penalty when given alternatives. We stand with our fellow Delawareans and reaffirm our opposition to the death penalty in all cases.

For all of these reasons, anything less than full repeal of the death penalty would be bad public policy. This issue holds financial, moral, and ethical implications for the citizens you are sworn to serve. We call for a full debate and vote—in both the House of Representatives and the Senate—on repeal of the death penalty in Delaware. Your constituents deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Ti Hall, Campaign Manager
The Delaware Repeal Project
on behalf of our Coalition Partners and the Delawareans they represent

Organizations

Darlene Battle, Executive Director, Delaware Alliance for Community Advancement
Reverend Dr. Silvester S. Beaman, President, Interdenominational Ministers Action Council of Delaware
Ashley Biden, Executive Director, Delaware Center for Justice
Abraham J. Bonowitz, SDPAC, Amnesty International Members of Delaware
Joanne Cabry, Chair, Progressive Democrats of Sussex County
Charito Calvachi, Executive Director, Latino Initiative on Restorative Justice
Kristin Froehlich, Board Chair, Delaware Citizens Opposed to the Death Penalty
Medard Gabel, Executive Director, Pacem in Terris, Delaware
Charles Johnson, Executive Director, H.A.R.P. (Homeless people Are Real People, too.)
Molly Keogh, Chair of Social Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalists of Central Delaware
Charlotte King, President, League of Women Voters of Delaware
Horace Knight, Delaware Coordinator, Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation
Samuel E Latham, President, Delaware State AFL-CIO
Reverend Dr. Lawrence Livingston, Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow
Kathleen MacRae, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware
Charles Madden, Executive Director, Wilmington HOPE Commission
Reverend Paula A Maiorano, Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow
Bishop W. Francis Malooly, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington
Jason Melrath, President, Progressive Democrats for Delaware
Reverend Dr. Donald Morton, Director, Complexities of Color Agenda
Reverend Jim Moseley, Executive Presbyter, New Castle Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church
Donald Peterson, Chair of Social & Environmental Justice Committee, Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware
Drew Serres, Delaware Organizer, Americans for Democratic Actions - Delaware Chapter

**Faith Leaders**

Bishop Boston Ford Jr., Outreach Holy Word Christian Church, Wilmington, DE
Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane, DE-MD Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Baltimore, MD
Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, Philadelphia Area United Methodist Church, Dover, DE
The Most Reverend Francis Malooly, Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, Wilmington, DE
Bishop Aretha E. Morton, Tabernacle Full Gospel Baptist Cathedral, Wilmington, DE
The Right Reverend Wayne P. Wright, Bishop of Delaware, Episcopal Diocese of Delaware, Wilmington, DE

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Reverend David Andrews, Rector, The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Joseph Archie, III, Newark United Methodist Church, Newark, DE
Reverend Elaine Ayres, New Zion United Methodist Church, Laurel, DE
Pastor Jane Ayers, Asbury United Methodist Church, Millington, MD
Reverend Dr. Jonathan Baker, Former Senior Pastor, Epworth United Methodist Church, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Pastor John Barton, St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, Milton, DE
Reverend Harry Baxter, Wesley United Methodist Church, Dover, DE
Rabbi Michael Beals, Congregation Beth Shalom, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Silvester S. Beaman, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE
Jeannie Bennett-Fleming, Director of Religious Education, St. Ann Catholic Church, Bethany Beach, DE
The Reverend James Bimbi, Rector, St. James' Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Russell Bohner, Christ Church Christiana Hundred, Wilmington, DE
Sister Barbara Jean Brown, Interfaith Resource Center, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Dale Brown, Asbury United Methodist Church, Smyrna, DE
Monseigneur Charles L. Brown, III, Vicar for Retired Priests, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington,
Reverend Mary Browne, Holly Oak Calvary United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend C. David Buchanan, Summit United Methodist Church, Middletown, DE
Reverend Dr. Christopher Bullock, Canaan Baptist Church, New Castle, DE
The Very Reverend Norman Carroll, St. Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Canon Lloyd S. Casson, The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Greg Chute, Unitarian Universalists of Central Delaware, Newark, DE
Abbess Barbara Clare Conroy, Anamchara Fellowship, Newark, DE
Reverend Gregory Corrigan, Resurrection Parish, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Celeste Cox, Christ Episcopal Church, Dover, DE
Reverend Thomas C. Davis, Retired, New Castle Presbytery, P.C.U.S.A, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend David P. DeSalvo, Chaplain, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Middletown, DE
Reverend Karen L. DeWerth-Wamester, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Bridgeville, DE
Father Roger DiBuo, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Bear, DE
Patrick Donovan, Executive Director of Youth Ministries, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Patricia Downing, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Parish, Wilmington, DE
Stephen Dutton, Chaplain, Wilmington Friends Meeting, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Alice Ervin, Whatcoat United Methodist Church, Dover, DE
Reverend Linda Eshelman, Pastor, Woodland United Methodist Church, Seaford, DE
Reverend Edwin R. Estevez, Convening Minister, FIRST New Worshipping Community, New Castle Presbytery, P.C.U.S.A
The Reverend Eric W. Evers, Reformation Lutheran Church, Milford, DE
Kathy Farmer, Hope United Methodist Church, Dover, DE
Reverend John C. Frambes, O.F.M., Saint Joseph Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Dr. John Gabage, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Paul W. Gennett, Jr., St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Newark, DE
Reverend Juan V. George, Associate Rector, Trinity Episcopal Parish, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Ronald Gerber, Christ Episcopal Church, Dover, DE
Reverend Dr. Douglas D. Gerdts, Pastor, First & Central Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Bruce P. Gillette, Co-Pastor, Limestone Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Carolyn P. Gillette, Co-Pastor, Limestone Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Steven Giuliano, St. Peter The Apostle Roman Catholic Church, New Castle, DE
The Reverend Edward Godden, Church of the Ascension, Claymont, DE
Reverend Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith, Skyline United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Patrick Boman Gordy-Stith, Asbury United Methodist Church, New Castle, DE
Linda Grabowski, Treasurer, Avenue United Methodist Church, Milford, DE
Apostle John Graham, Pastor, Temple United Church, Inc., Wilmington, DE
Reverend William F. Graney, Pastor, Resurrection Parish, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Robert B. Gray, Clergy, The United Methodist Church, Harrington, DE
The Reverend H. Sterling Green, Retired, Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Reverend Wesley Hamlin, Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Castle, DE
The Reverend Nanese A. Hawthorne, Diocese of Easton EFM, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Reverend Paul Huebner, Retired, The United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Brad Hinton, Rector, St. David's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE
Pastor John F. Holden, Mt. Salem in Rockford Park United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
Sister Carol Ann Holder, Holy Child Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
Monseigneur John P. Hopkins, Pastor, St Margaret of Scotland Roman Catholic Church, Newark, DE
The Reverend Louise Howlett, Priest Associate, St. James' Episcopal Church-Millcreek, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Peter B. Huiner, Episcopal Church of St. Andrew & Matthew, Wilmington, DE
The Very Reverend Steven P. Hurley, V.G., STL, Vicar General, Moderator of the Curia, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington
Keith Illidge, Clergy, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE
Pastor James Jackson, Associate Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, New Castle, DE
Reverend Andy Jacob, Hanover Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Thomas Jewett, Retired, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, Wilmington, DE
Elder Tyrone C. Johnson, Sr., Interdenominational Ministers Action Council, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Lester N. Justice, Pastor, Simpson United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Edward N. Kay, Assistant to the Bishop, DE-MD Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Baltimore, MD
The Reverend Gregory T. Knepp, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Ocean City, MD
Reverend Dr. Karl Kraft, Kenton United Methodist, Clayton, DE
Reverend Steven LaMotte, Hope United Methodist Church, Dover, DE
The Very Reverend William B. Lane, Episcopal Diocese of Delaware, Hockessin, DE
Pastor Karen E. Larson, Grace Lutheran Church, Easton, MD
The Reverend Timothy A. Leitzke, Tree of Life Lutheran Church, Odessa, DE
The Reverend Emily Hollars Leitzke, DE-MD Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Kathy Lessard, Head of Church Council/Lay leader, Church of the Holy Cross, Dover, DE
Reverend Julie Lewis, Trinity United Methodist Church, Laurel, DE
Reverend Dr. Lawrence M. Livingston, Senior Pastor, Mother African Union Church, Wilmington, DE
The Very Reverend Dianne Loufman, St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Paul C. Lundmark, Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Hockessin, DE
Reverend Betty Jo Magee, Grace United Methodist Church, Georgetown, DE
Reverend Paula A. Maiorano, Unitarian Universalist, Wilmington, DE
The Very Reverend Dr. Ian Markham, President of Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA
The Reverend Dennis Marshall, Pastor, Chippey African United Methodist Church, Hockessin, DE
The Reverend Elizabeth Masterson, St. Nicholas' Episcopal Parish, Newark, DE
Reverend Scot McClymont, Kenton United Methodist Church, Clayton, DE
Monseigneur Daniel McGlynn, Holy Cross Catholic Church, Dover, DE
Sister Teresa E. McMurrin, Holy Spirit Chapel, Dover, DE
Reverend Joseph McQuaide, Church of the Holy Cross, Dover, DE
Reverend Fred Melton, Pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Wilmington, DE
Sally Milbury-Steen, Co-Clerk, Newark Friends Meeting, Newark, DE
Father Thomas Morrison, Woodside United Methodist Church, Woodside, DE
Reverend Dr. Donald Morton, Tabernacle Full Gospel Baptist Cathedral, Wilmington, DE
Reverend James L. Moseley, Executive Presbyter, New Castle Presbytery, P.C.U.S.A, Newark, DE
Elaine Murphy, Education Chairperson, Hillcrest Bellefonte United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Rita B. Nelson, St. Peters Episcopal Church, Lewes, DE
LaVaida Owens-White, Faith Community Nurse, Christ Our King Roman Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Dr. David Palmer, Newark United Methodist Church, Newark, DE
Reverend Tom Pasmore, Lead Pastor, Avenue United Methodist Church, Milford, DE
Reverend Clarence E. Pettit, Spirit of Life Lutheran Church, Wilmington, DE
Deacon Susan Phillips, The Episcopal Parish of All Saints' Church and St. George's Chapel, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Reverend Neta Pringle, Pilgrimage Ministries, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Anne Pruett-Barnett, Senior Pastor, Grace United Methodist Church, Wilmington, DE
Deacon Kenneth Pulliam, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church, Wilmington, DE
Elder Janesta Ray, Tabernacle Full Gospel Baptist Cathedral, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Dr. Samuel Richardson, New Mt. Bethel Baptist Church, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Francis J. Rinaldi, OSFS, St. Anthony's of Padua Parish, Wilmington, DE
Rabbi Yair Robinson, Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Timothy Rodden, Director of Pastoral Services, Christiana Care, Newark, DE
The Reverend Jeffrey Ross, Rector, Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, Lewes, DE
Robin Ryan, Hockessin United Methodist Church, Hockessin, DE
Reverend Ronald Schatz, Stevenson United Methodist Church, Millsboro, DE
Brother William Schatzabel, All Saints' Episcopal Church, Milton, DE
Reverend Kris Schonewolf, Pastor, Ewell's St. Paul United Methodist Church, Clayton, DE
Reverend Donald Schuler, Bethesda United Methodist Church, Middletown, DE
Ruth Sheaffer, Women's Ministry Leader, St. Matthews By-The-Sea United Methodist Church, Ocean View, DE
Reverend Paul Sherwood, Union United Methodist Church, Bridgeville, DE
Reverend Dr. Thomas Short, The United Methodist Church, Hockessin, DE
Reverend D. Michael Smith, Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware, Lewes, DE
Reverend Dr. Joshua Snyder, First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Vicky Starnes, Senior Pastor, Epworth United Methodist Church, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Evangelist Sharon Stokes, Interdenominational Ministers Action Council, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Jane Day Stover, Pastor, Elsmere Presbyterian Church, PCUSA, Wilmington, DE
Reverend Daniel Swanson, Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, New Castle, DE
Pastor Robert M. Undercuffler, Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church, Newark, DE
Reverend Blake H. Wamester, Retired, New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Bridgeville, DE
Reverend Andrew Weber, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Newark, Newark, DE
Apostle Thomas Wesley Weeks, Pastor, New Destiny Fellowship, Wilmington, DE
The Reverend Max J. Wolf, Rector, All Saints' Church & St. George's Chapel, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Father John Wright, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Harrington, DE
Reverend Amy Yarnall, Senior Pastor, Wesley United Methodist Church, Dover, DE