

House Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
Pennsylvania's Death Penalty Moratorium
Thursday, June 11, 2015

Submitted Written Testimony



June 5, 2015

The Honorable Ron Marsico
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
315J Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202105
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2105

Dear Mr. Marsico,

In unity with Pope Francis and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I, as a Sister of Saint Joseph, reaffirm absolute respect and protection for every human life, from conception to natural death, even when one of those lives has been responsible for a heinous crime. I believe that those who commit violent crimes should be held accountable for their actions, and the public should be protected from those who seek to harm others, but there is strong evidence that we can achieve justice and protect our communities without resorting to more killing in the name of vengeance.

The killing of a murderer will not make anything right and just. Another death will not bring back the sons, daughters, parents, grandparents, and siblings lost to homicide. Society will not benefit from imposing the death penalty, nor will it be harmed by showing mercy. By turning away from the death penalty, we are embracing hope, not despair. Let us break the cycle of violence that so plagues our society. We hope that this spirit of respect for human life is shown throughout all laws and policies of the Commonwealth.

Additionally, Study after study shows that death penalty cases are far more expensive than cases where a sentence of life without parole or other long prison sentences are sought due to the Constitutionally mandated safeguards that are required in capital cases. The expenditure of the state's limited financial resources should reflect our values, and we must ask ourselves if the resources currently being spent on the pursuit of executions could be redirected to programs that will better serve victims' families and address the root causes of crime, in particular on **education** for the very young, that they may start off with hope that they can live decent lives without resorting to crime.

I encourage our state's leaders to conclude that the death penalty is inconsistent with the values our state wishes to uphold and it should never be used again.

Sincerely,

Catherine Robinson, SSJ



June 5, 2015

The Honorable Joseph R. Petrarca
Democratic Chair, House Judiciary Committee
220 Irvis Office Building
PO Box 202055
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2055

Dear Mr. Petrarca,

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