



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7
 2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
 PHONE 510-981-7170 FAX 510-981-7177 kworthington@ci.berkeley.ca.us

ACTION CALENDAR

December 8, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmembers Kriss Worthington and Max Anderson
 Subject: Resolution for an End to Death Sentences in Alameda County

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council adopt a Resolution calling for an end to death sentences in Alameda County.

BACKGROUND:

According to a recent analysis by the Alameda County Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, among the 24 largest counties in the state, Alameda County ranks 4th for total death sentences from 2000 to 2007, 4th for death sentences per capita and 5th for death sentences per murder charged. Compared to Los Angeles County, Alameda County sends more than twice as many people to death row per murder charged.

The homicide rate in Alameda County is 3rd among the 24 largest counties, yet the when it comes to the average number of homicides solved we are 23rd in the state. Executions take away limited resources that could be used to solve and prevent crimes from happening.

Approximately \$14.3 million dollars have been spent by Alameda County since the year 2000 on executions. That \$ 14.3 million could have funded the salaries of 31 additional experienced high school teachers or 29 new homicide investigators. It is also estimated that death penalty trials cost \$ 1.1 million dollars more than a murder trial where the defendant is permanently imprisoned.

Additionally, since 1973, 129 people have been freed from death row in this country based on evidence which proves that they were in fact innocent. The conviction of innocent people and the other problems with the death penalty have led a majority of nations, and now 14 states to reject the death penalty. The San Francisco District Attorney has rejected the death penalty in favor of other alternatives such as investing in violence prevention programs.

The death penalty is morally unjust not only because people are sometimes wrongfully sentenced but also because there are racial and economic inequities in the application of

the death penalty. Allowing executions to happen while murders are unsolved, and without addressing the lack of jobs or access to education is wrong and Berkeley should join many community and religious organizations in urging Alameda County to stop using the death penalty and increase funding for prevention programs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

CONTACT PERSON:

Kriss Worthington, Councilmember, District 7	981-7170
Max Anderson, Councilmember, District 3	981-7130

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. List of organizations that have already adopted resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CALLING FOR AN END TO DEATH SENTENCES IN ALAMEDA 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 14 of our own states; more than 125 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; and

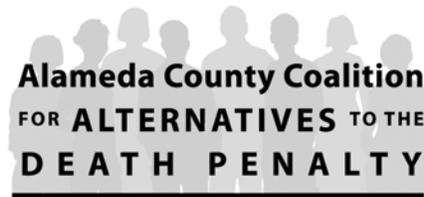
WHEREAS, death penalty cases cost Alameda County taxpayers millions more than permanent incarceration but do not make us safer, while those resources could be better used to solve more crimes or for other effective public safety programs; and

WHEREAS, Alameda County has historically sent more people to death row than any other Bay Area county, even after adjusting for murder rates and population size; and

WHEREAS, the District Attorney in neighboring San Francisco has chosen to pursue alternatives instead of the death penalty, allowing her to invest resources in proven violence prevention programs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it believes that it is time for public safety priorities to change in Alameda County and that it calls on:

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



**Organizations, Congregations and Businesses that Have Adopted
the ACCADP Resolution**

1,000 Mothers to Prevent Violence, Hayward
Academy of Truck Driving, Oakland
ACLU, Oakland Chapter
ACLU, Berkeley Chapter
Alameda County Council of the League of Women Voters
Amnesty International, #612, Oakland Chapter
Bay Association of the United Church of Christ
Black Caucus of California Community College Students
Board of Rabbis of Northern California
Business Interaction Exchange, Oakland
California Crime Victims for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
Death Penalty Focus, California
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, Fremont
East Bay Community Law Center
East Bay Young Democrats
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Oakland
Gray Panthers, Oakland and Berkeley Chapters
Kehilla Community Synagogue, Oakland
Newman Nonviolent Peacemaking Group, Berkeley
Nishmat Shalom, Berkeley
Pax Christi, St. Joseph, Fremont
PC Doctor, Emeryville
Plymouth United Church of Christ, Oakland
Progressive Jewish Alliance, California
St. Edward Roman Catholic Church, Newark
Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, Pleasanton
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club, Bay Area