



Death Penalty Information Center

Media Advisory for: March 22, 2012

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CONNECTICUT LEGISLATORS PREPARE TO ADDRESS THE STATE'S DEATH PENALTY

Families of Victims Among Those Supporting Repeal

(Washington, DC) Legislators in Connecticut are expected to vote soon on SB 280, a bill to replace the death penalty with a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release. **On March 21, SB 280 passed the Judiciary Committee (24-19), preparing the way for votes in the Senate and House of Representatives.**

The bill would prospectively repeal the death penalty, and it has gained the support of over 179 victims' families and friends, who believe the state's capital punishment statute does not serve their needs for support or provide the promised "closure" after the loss of a loved one. A similar bill was considered by state legislators in 2011. Governor Dannel Malloy has pledged to sign the repeal bill.

Other states, including Maryland, Kansas, Kentucky and California, are considering death penalty repeal in 2012. If the bill becomes law, Connecticut will become the fifth state in five years to end the death penalty. Illinois (2011), New Mexico (2009) and New Jersey (2007) have recently voted to abolish the death penalty. In 2004, New York's death penalty law was declared unconstitutional and the last inmate was removed from the state's death row in 2007. Around the country, death sentences and executions have declined significantly since the 1990s.

On March 27, NAACP President Benjamin Jealous, along with African-American leaders from across Connecticut, will be hosting a press conference concerning the pending legislation. The press conference will begin at 12:30 p.m. in Room 1C of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

To speak with Richard Dieter, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, about state trends or declining national use of the death penalty, please contact Elaine de Leon at 202-289-2275 or edeleon@deathpenaltyinfo.org.

For information specific to Connecticut, contact Ben Jones, Executive Director of the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty, at 860-231-1489 or ben.jones@cnadp.org, or Shari Silberstein, Executive Director of Equal Justice USA, at 718-801-8942 or sharis@ejusa.org.

The Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org) is a non-profit organization serving the media and the public with analysis and information on issues concerning capital punishment. DPIC was founded in 1990 and prepares in-depth reports, issues press releases, conducts briefings for the media, and serves as a resource to those working on this issue.

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