

DP DEATH PENALTY IC INFORMATION CENTER

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CONTACT: Margot Friedman at 202-332-5550 or
mfriedman@dupontcirclecommunications.com

DEATH PENALTY REPEAL ASSURED IN MARYLAND

State to Become Sixth State in Six Years to Abolish Capital Punishment

On March 15, the Maryland House of Delegates decisively passed (82-56) a bill that would replace the death penalty with life without parole, clearing the way for Maryland to become the sixth state in six years to abandon capital punishment. Earlier this month, the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 27-20. Governor Martin O'Malley, who introduced the repeal legislation earlier in the year, has pledged to sign the bill into law.

"State after state is deciding that the death penalty is simply not worth the risks and costs to retain. Maryland is the sixth state in recent years to choose this course, but it won't be the last," said Richard Dieter, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center.

A timeline of Maryland's death penalty and more information on recent national trends is available at www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/DPAAtAGlance.pdf

The bill garnered support from a broad coalition of murder victims' families, communities of color, law enforcement officials, faith leaders, civil rights leaders, and other prominent individuals, including Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, Ben Jealous, President of the NAACP, and Kirk Bloodsworth, who was freed from the state's death row.

When signed into law, Maryland will become the 18th state in the country to do away with the death penalty. Maryland has carried out five executions since 1976, and there are currently five inmates on death row, who are unaffected by the legislation. Maryland has not had an execution since 2005.

To speak with Richard Dieter about the costs, trends, or declining national use of the death penalty, please contact Elaine de Leon at 202-289-2275 or edeleon@deathpenaltyinfo.org.

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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.