

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

*For Immediate Release*

**January 13, 2010**

Contact: Stefanie Faucher, 415-243-0143, [stefanie@deathpenalty.org](mailto:stefanie@deathpenalty.org)  
Lance Lindsey, 415-243-0143, [lance@deathpenalty.org](mailto:lance@deathpenalty.org)

## **California Death Row Reaches 700**

California reached 700 people on death row as a result of a sentence imposed earlier this month. California now has more than twice as many death row prisoners as Texas, which had 331 as of January 11<sup>th</sup>. Florida has the second largest death row in the country with 391 as of January 13<sup>th</sup>.

In 2009, new death sentences reached their lowest levels nationally since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. However, in California the number of new death sentences for 2009 reached 29, an almost 50% increase over the last few years. But the vast majority of those death verdicts came from just three counties (Los Angeles, Riverside and Orange). Los Angeles County alone had 13 death sentences last year. The entire state of Texas had only nine.

Executions have been on hold in California for nearly four years due to challenges regarding how the state adopted its execution protocols. The state is currently allowing for its second round of public comments to be submitted on the lethal injection process. All public comments must be submitted by January 20<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

A public opinion poll conducted in 2009 found that **Californians overwhelmingly preferred a sentence of permanent imprisonment to the death penalty: 60% to 40%**. When researchers add the requirement that prisoners work and pay restitution, support for the death penalty plummeted to just 26% while support for the alternative was more than 64% (Survey Research Center of the University of Virginia, 2009).

Stefanie Faucher, Associate Director of Death Penalty Focus, said “The size of California’s death row has reached epic proportions. We need to end this charade and admit that our death penalty experiment has failed. Resentencing everyone on death row to permanent imprisonment will save the state \$1 billion over the next five years. This is money the state desperately needs right now. It is being wasted on a failed public policy.”

Lance Lindsey, Executive Director of Death Penalty Focus said “The majority of Californians-- 60%-- prefer locking up prisoners permanently. Californians want swift and certain justice and the death penalty is neither.”

Death Penalty Focus is a national non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the death penalty and its alternatives. Founded in 1988, the organization is based in San Francisco. For more information, visit: [www.deathpenalty.org](http://www.deathpenalty.org).

###