

DEATH PENALTY FOCUS

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47 Members of Law Enforcement from California Cite Problems with the Death Penalty and Call for Reforms

Letters Sent to the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice

Thirty current and former prosecutors, cops, and corrections officials have signed a letter to the *California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice* stating that, “California’s death penalty is broken.” The letter cites the excessive cost of death penalty cases, the risk of wrongful conviction and the stress put on victims’ families as reasons the death penalty is not working.

They note, “By pursuing life without parole sentences instead of death, resources now spent on the death penalty prosecutions and appeals could be used to investigate unsolved homicides, modernize crime labs, and expand effective violence prevention programs.”

Signatories include: San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey, the Police Chief of Newark Ray Samuels, former Director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Jeanne Woodford, former Deputy Attorney General John Duree, and eleven current and former Deputy District Attorneys from counties across California.

In addition, seventeen current and former judges have signed a letter to the Commission stating, “We write to express our concerns about the current application and administration of the death penalty in California.” The letter points to the incredible strain capital cases have put on the entire judicial system in California.

The letter concludes, “Any attempt to reform California’s death penalty must be comprehensive, and must ensure a means of providing sustained and sufficient resources for the entire system. We urge the Commission to consider recommending a moratorium on the death penalty in California until systemic reforms are implemented.” The signatory judges served on the California Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and/or Superior Court in California.

Both letters, with a combined total of 47 signatures, will be presented to the Commission by Darryl Stallworth, a former Alameda County Deputy District Attorney, on Friday, March 28th at the Commission’s third and final public death penalty hearing in Santa Clara.

The California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice was created by the California State Senate in 2004 to investigate the causes of wrongful conviction and wrongful executions, and to recommend reforms to make California’s criminal justice system “just, fair, and accurate.” More information on their mission and membership can be found at, www.ccfaj.org.

Copies of both letters are available on our website:

<http://death.live.radicaldesigns.org/downloads/Law%20Enforcement%20Signatory%20Letter%20with%20current%20signers.pdf>

<http://death.live.radicaldesigns.org/downloads/Judges%20letter-Final%20with%20current%20signers.pdf>