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## **INTERFAITH LEADERS OPPOSE ALL DEATH PENALTY PROPOSALS**

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State, a statewide advocacy organization representing progressive Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, and Reform Jewish congregations, clergy and individuals, strongly opposes any proposal that includes reviving the death penalty in New York State.

"Promoting the death penalty is literally dead-end thinking by those who have lost faith in humanity's capacity for transformation. It is a confession of failure."  
*Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert, former chair and current IINYS Board*

"To kill someone for killing lowers us to the level of the killer. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth leaves us all blind and toothless. Until we rise above the lowest common level of values, we will only encourage more killing. Dr. King spoke eloquently to the theme that the "violence stops here." *The Rev. Dr. Harlan Ratmeyer, IINYS Board member*

"One would think that by this time in humanity's history we might have moved beyond retribution. It's time to commit to restorative justice to address the hurt of all touched by violent crime. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' (Romans 12) Aren't people called 'to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'

"Part of doing justice is to oppose the death penalty, because despite attempts to provide legal safeguards, the death penalty has not been carried out fairly and likely cannot be made fair. As reprehensible as the taking of any life is, do we really need to take another life to seek to even the score? There are better ways to protect all the citizens of New York State and better deterrents as well." (Micah 6). *Pastor Paul Rees-Rohrbacher, IINYS Board of Directors*

Since 1958, the Reform Jewish Movement has formally opposed the death penalty. The resolutions adopted said that capital punishment 'does not act as an effective deterrent to crime' and 'we believe that there is no crime for which the taking of human life by society is justified, and that it is the obligation of society to evolve other methods in dealing with crime.'

"We urge our government officials to heed the age-old Jewish commandment, 'Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof--Justice, justice, you shall pursue.' Justice, not vengeance, is what we should dispense." *Barbara Zaron, IINYS Board Member*

Interfaith IMPACT of NYS joins religious and civic leaders, editorial boards, and community organizations across the state in urging the Legislature to stand firm against appeals to revive the death penalty.

April 24, 2006