



**International Commission  
against the Death Penalty**

**President**

Federico Mayor

**Members**

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

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**Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Commissioner Bill Richardson visits the US state of Delaware**

International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP)'s Commissioner Bill Richardson visited the US State of Delaware on 27 March to lend his and ICDP's support to the efforts to repeal the death penalty in Delaware. He was accompanied by the ICDP Secretary-General Asunta Vivo Cavaller.

As part of his visit, Commissioner Bill Richardson met with Governor Jack Markell. Following this meeting, Commissioner Richardson addressed a press conference. He also had various meetings with Delaware state legislators and was provided the opportunity to address a formal session on the state Senate.

Commissioner Richardson, who is former Governor of the US state of New Mexico and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, explained his decision to sign into law the repeal of the death penalty in his state during his tenure as Governor on 18 March 2009.

"While I was considering whether to sign or veto the death penalty repeal law in New Mexico, I invited people to contact me with their views. I heard compelling arguments from family members who had lost loved ones and from law enforcement officers concerned about their on-the-job safety. But I also heard equally compelling arguments from members of the clergy as well as from family members who also lost loved ones and from law enforcement officers who urged me to sign the repeal in New Mexico. I respected everyone's opinions and took their experiences to heart, as I am certain that all Delaware state legislators are doing right now".

The legislation to repeal the death penalty in Delaware, Senate Bill 19, was introduced in March, 2013. The bill was passed in the Senate by a vote of 11-10. However, when the bill was sent to the House Judiciary Committee of the state House of Representatives, the House Judiciary Committee voted (6-5) to take no action on the bill, keeping it in the committee and preventing it from reaching the full House of Representatives. The voting was conducted after the Judiciary Committee held a hearing in April, 2013. The bill has a total of 20 cosponsors: 7 Senators and 13 Representatives. Of the 20 cosponsors, two are Republicans. Currently, there are 17 inmates facing the death penalty in Delaware.

Commissioner Richardson explained the reason for his visit to Delaware by stating: "I am here in Delaware today to urge Members of the state House of Representatives to release Senate Bill 19 from the Judiciary Committee and bring it forward for a full House debate and vote. At the very, very least, Delaware deserves a vote on this important piece of legislation".

Commissioner Richardson called on the State of Delaware to join the global trend towards the abolition of the death penalty. According to the United Nations, some 150 countries from all regions have



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abolished the death penalty or do not execute. In the USA, 18 States have abolished the death penalty and there are other States that are moving towards the abolition of the death penalty. Recently, on 11 February, Governor Jay Inslee declared a moratorium on executions in the State of Washington.

Federico Mayor  
President of the International Commission  
against the Death Penalty

## Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is composed of 15 persons of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Mr. Federico Mayor.

ICDP opposes the death penalty under any circumstances believing that it violates the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ICDP promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in those states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that rarely use the death penalty. In states that continue to carry out executions ICDP urges strict adherence to international standards.

ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Its secretariat is based in Geneva.