



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President

Federico Mayor

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Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

Michèle Duvivier
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Statement by the international commission against the death penalty: Californian voters can show global leadership on death penalty

(Geneva) A group of eminent persons from around the world has called on voters in California to show international leadership and reject the death penalty in a public vote on November 6 2012.

The International Commission against the Death Penalty said that by voting in favor of Proposition 34, the SAFE California Act, California would join other democracies in the world in banning executions. A positive vote would encourage other US states – and countries with close links to California, such as Japan – to abolish capital punishment too.

Rejection of the death penalty by California would further help to separate the USA from a small and increasingly isolated group of countries – China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen – that are the world's most prolific executioners.

"This is a chance for Californian voters to replace capital punishment with justice that works, and to show leadership on the international stage," said Federico Mayor, President of the International Commission against the Death Penalty.

"The death penalty has no place in a modern justice system. Experience worldwide shows that executions do not deliver public safety or deter violent crime – but instead endorse violence, damage society and risk the killing of the innocent. We hope that Californian citizens vote yes on Proposition 34."

Proposition 34 would replace the death penalty with life in prison – without the possibility of parole – for murder, with inmates also required to work and pay restitution to a victims' compensation fund.

Executions in California cost on average an estimated \$308 million each. The Proposition 34 initiative would redirect funds to provide increased public safety and public benefit, including by bringing more violent criminals to justice. Currently 46% of murders – about 1,000 cases – and 56% of reported rapes go unsolved in California each year.

It would also end the possibility of executing an innocent person. According to the Death Penalty Information Center, 140 death-row inmates have been exonerated across the USA since 1973.



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“Over two-thirds of all states – according to the United Nations more than 150 countries from all regions and cultures – have now rejected capital punishment because of its inherent cruelty, its ineffectiveness at deterring crime and the ever-present risk of executing the innocent. We hope that on November 6, California will join them,” said Federico Mayor.

In the USA, public support for capital punishment has dwindled to its lowest levels for nearly four decades. Recent years have seen abolition of the death penalty in Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico and New York, and a moratorium on executions in Oregon.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is composed of 13 personalities 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 16 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. There is a small secretariat in Geneva which is responsible for organizing the work of the ICDP.