



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Maryland (USA) close to abolishing the death penalty

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) warmly welcomes the move to abolish the death penalty in Maryland.

Following the vote in the Senate last week, the House of Delegates also voted to repeal capital punishment on 15 March. The Governor, a supporter of abolition, is expected to sign the bill into law making Maryland the eighteenth state in the US to abolish the death penalty.

“I congratulate the legislature for their courage, political leadership and their decision to consign the death penalty to the history books”, said Mr. Federico Mayor, President of ICDP.

Five prisoners remain on death row. ICDP urges the Governor to commute their death sentences to terms of imprisonment and to close Maryland’s death row for good.

Seventeen U.S. states have already abolished capital punishment. Maryland will become the eighteenth and the sixth state in six years to repeal the death penalty. The previous five states were Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico and New York. Other states such as New Hampshire are moving towards abolition.

According to the United Nations some 150 countries, from all regions, have abolished the death penalty or do not practice it. These nations recognize that modern justice systems must protect the public from crime but without the cruelty of executions and the inherent risks of executing the innocent. The Washington-based Death Penalty Information Center has recorded that 142 death row inmates across the USA have been exonerated since 1973.

The vast majority of executions take place in: China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, USA and Yemen. However, in the USA the number of executions and death sentences are steadily declining as more states repeal capital punishment and courts resort to life imprisonment as an alternative to the death penalty.



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ICDP urges Governor Martin O'Malley to sign the Bill into law without delay and urges other states in the USA to follow Maryland's lead.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

BACKGROUND

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is composed of 14 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. It's secretariat is based in Geneva.