



# Death Penalty Abolition Week *for* Ohio Faith Communities

Friday, October 8 - Sunday, October 17



## ACTION TOOLKIT

Compiled by: Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center



# Introduction

Thank you for joining Ohio Faith Communities for Death Penalty Abolition Week. This event is to show solidarity across faith traditions to abolish the death penalty in Ohio. We welcome you to take action in a number of different ways this week, many of which are highlighted in this packet.

The death penalty is a broken system beyond repair. It is an unevenly applied sentence that disproportionately affects people of color. As faith leaders, we see people first, not the worst thing they have ever done. Rather than give in to the human desire for vengeance we seek forgiveness and redemption, as we are all interconnected. People of faith have an important role sharing our voices on this issue because we are leaders in our communities.

There has never been this much support to end the death penalty on both sides of the aisle. The time is now.

**Take the first step...** by signing the [faith leader letter of support \(click here\)](#).

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# Death Penalty Resources

[Death Penalty One Pager](#)

[Official Religious Statements](#)

[NoDeathPenaltyOH Toolkit](#)

[Cost Study: The High Cost of the Death Penalty in Hamilton County and the Extreme Disparities it Drives.](#)

## Education Event Resources

An educational event is a great way to engage your faith community in a broader understanding of the issue. These events can occur during an already scheduled gathering, such as bible study. To bring in a speaker see the options below.

1. Just Mercy video night and companion guide. [Link to example here.](#)
2. Request a coalition speaker by emailing [becky@ijpccincinnati.org](mailto:becky@ijpccincinnati.org).
3. To request an exoneree, murder victim family member, or other person connected to the death penalty please email [becky@ijpccincinnati.org](mailto:becky@ijpccincinnati.org).

# Social Media

#NoDeathPenaltyOH

## Twitter

We seek forgiveness not vengeance. That's why we are taking part in #NoDeathPenaltyOH with Ohio faith communities. With unprecedented bipartisan support, let's end the death penalty in Ohio.

[Click to tweet.](#)

Our faith teaches us to see the person first. We are not the worst thing we have ever done. We support HB 183 and SB 103 as part of #NoDeathPenaltyOH

[Click to tweet.](#)

For every five executions, there is one exoneree from death row in Ohio. Join us and other Ohio faith communities during #NoDeathPenaltyOH

[Click to tweet.](#)

## Facebook

This week, faith communities across Ohio are joining together to call for the abolition of the death penalty. People of faith have an important voice in this movement. Our faith teaches us about the dignity and inherent worth of each person, a sentiment that runs across many faith communities. Ending the death penalty has never had this much support, on both sides of the aisle. Please join us in supporting Senate Bill 103 and House Bill 183 to abolish Ohio's Death Penalty. #FaithWeekforNoDeathPenaltyOH

Include graphic or hopeful photo.

# Email Alert

Spread the news and inform your community about why this week is important and what it means.

This week, faith communities across Ohio are joining together to call for an end to Ohio's death penalty. The voices of people of faith are crucial in this effort because we are proponents of life and leaders in our communities. Our faith calls us to value each person and seek forgiveness, not vengeance. We are not only the worst thing we have ever done.

The death penalty system is broken and cannot be repaired. Ohio has seen eleven men on death row exonerated, two just in this past year. For every five executions Ohio has had, one person has been exonerated. Additionally, receiving the death penalty is often determined by geography and race. There are 38 counties in Ohio that have never produced a death sentence.

Lastly, it is estimated that Ohio spends nearly 17 million dollars a year capital cases when those resources could go to aiding murder victim's families. Through our faith we are called to create space for healing and forgiveness, not retribution and vengeance.

Join us this week in supporting House Bill 183 and Senate Bill 103 to abolish Ohio's Death penalty. We will be hosting more ways to get involved this week.

For more information visit [nodeathpenaltyoh.org](http://nodeathpenaltyoh.org).  
Facts and statistics from [At All Costs: The High Cost of the Death Penalty in Hamilton County and the Extreme Disparities it Drives](#)

To download [click here](#)

# Bulletin Insert

## Option One

Join the movement to end the death penalty in Ohio.

Our faith community is joining many faith groups throughout the state during Death Penalty Abolition Week for Ohio Faith Communities by raising our voices in the campaign to end the death penalty in Ohio. The voices of people of faith are instrumental in this cause. We cannot create a culture that supports and emboldens life while the death penalty still exists. There has never been this much support to abolish the death penalty on both sides of the aisle. Please join us in various actions we will be taking to spread light on this issue.

## Option Two

Stop by to learn more about the death penalty in Ohio.

Our faith community is joining many faith groups throughout the state to explore the realities of the death penalty in Ohio. Just this year two people were exonerated from Ohio's death row. The voices of people of faith are instrumental in this cause as the protectors of the dignity of human life. Please join us at these/this event(s) to learn more about death penalty abolition and why the time is now.

[Download here](#)

# Bulletin Article

Our faith is bolstered in the belief in the inherent dignity of human beings and the importance of forgiveness, not vengeance. The human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society and stands at the heart of our faith's understanding of justice. Capital punishment contradicts this ethic. What reflection is shown in our society when we choose to execute our own citizens. As people of faith, we are called to this issue and hold a very important voice in this cause.

The death penalty system is riddled in geographic and racial disparities. Which has led to Ohio sentencing innocent people to die. For every five executions that Ohio has had, one person has been exonerated. Just this year, in 2021, Ohio added two more exonerees to their list making it 11 total. One wrongful conviction is one too many.

There has been growing support for death penalty abolition on both sides of the aisle as we move towards abolition. We recently passed legislation banning the executions of those who suffer from severe mental illnesses and Governor DeWine continues to give reprieve on cases. There is broad bipartisan support to end this cruel and unusual punishment.

This week is Ohio Faith Communities for Death Penalty Abolition Week. We invite you to learn more at [nodeathpenaltyoh.com](http://nodeathpenaltyoh.com).

## Download here

For more examples [visit this link](#) from Catholic Mobilizing Network



# Prayer & Prayer Service

God of mercy,

We gather to pray for an end to the many acts of violence occurring in our society.

We pray for in a special way all those impacted by the use of the death penalty.

Guide us with your love and compassion, O God, as we strive to be vessels of your mercy and live in a way that lifts up the dignity of all life.

Help us to live the path of discipleship and faith as we work to end the death penalty and promote a more restorative justice system.

Amen.

[Prayer Service Example Link](#)

[More Prayer Examples](#)

For more resources please email: [bekky@ijpccincinnati.org](mailto:bekky@ijpccincinnati.org)

## Sermon or Message

"I feel morally and intellectually obligated simply to concede that the death penalty experiment has failed. From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death."

- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun

Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—"

Romans 12:17-18 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

## Links to Samples

[Variety of Christian Options](#)

[Catholic Homily](#)

[Jewish Sermon](#)

[Jewish Texts](#)

[Unitarian Universalists](#)



# Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor showcase opinions and sentiments related to societal issues. When people really care about an issue and take the time to share that opinion with the press, legislators take notice.

## LTE How To:

1. Decide on the one clear argument you want to make.
2. Often publications are looking for 200 words or less. Be sure to check with the individual paper on their requirements.
3. Make it personal to you and provide a specific recommendation (i.e. abolishing the death penalty and using those funds to support murder victim's families).
4. End by summarizing your argument.
5. Edit.
6. List your contact information at the bottom of the piece.
7. Submit to your local newspaper.
8. Follow up if you haven't heard from them within a week.

Download tips [here](#).

Sample LTEs:

[Chagrin Valley](#)

[Cleveland.com](#)

# Letter Writing Resources

Legislators like to hear from people in their district and they or their staff personally review handwritten letters. This holds weight in how they vote on bills. Host a letter writing party to address death penalty abolition with your legislators.

## How to Host a Letter Writing Party

1. Set a time to gather with your family, friends, congregants, faith study group, etc. (snacks and music make it more fun!)
2. Gather supplies: pens, paper, envelopes, printed postcards.
3. Have information on the bills, statistics on the death penalty and other resources available to reference.
4. Locate your house and senate legislator.
5. Write letters!
6. Address, stamp and mail the letters. Or hand deliver the stack to their office.

Download Letter Writing Party Resource [here](#).

Download Sample Letter [here](#).

Printable postcards [here](#).

## Next Steps

Plan an action with your team. Register on our website. If you need assistance, more resources or have questions contact us:

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