

P.O. Box 2065
Topeka, KS 66601
(785) 23-KCADP
www.ksabolition.org



A 501(c)(3) organization | Fall 2011

Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Mark Your Calendars for KCADP's RALLY FOR REPEAL!

On Saturday, November 5th, the Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty will be hosting a Rally for Repeal in Wichita.

Please join us for this exciting event as death penalty opponents from around the state join together to make ending the death penalty the top priority for the 2012 legislative session!

As part of the Rally for Repeal, KCADP is pleased to announce that Jeremy Schroeder, who led the successful effort to repeal the death penalty in Illinois, will be our keynote speaker.

Jeremy is an attorney with an extensive background in nonprofit and public service. He most recently served as the Executive Director of the Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, which led the campaign that ended Illinois' death penalty in January 2011.

As part of the rally, KCADP will also conduct four workshops to help you prepare for the nearing 2012 legisla-

tive session. You will be able to choose in-depth workshops on the risk of executing an innocent person, public safety and cost, how the death penalty is inconsistently applied, and working with victims' families who oppose the death penalty.

The Rally for Repeal will be preceded by the 2011 Annual Board Meeting, held at 1pm. All members are invited to attend. If you do not wish to attend the board meeting, there will be a Welcome Reception beginning at 1:15pm.

The Rally for Repeal will be a great opportunity to hear from someone who has successfully repealed the death penalty and to gain skills to make you a more effective advocate for repealing the death penalty in Kansas.

The 2012 legislative session will be here before we know it! Get a jump start on repealing the Kansas death penalty in 2012 by attending the Rally for Repeal!

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What: Rally for Repeal in 2012!
When: Saturday, November 5, 2011, 1:00pm-4:00pm
1pm-Board Meeting
1:15pm-Rally Welcome Reception
Where: Wichita State University
Metroplex,
5015 E. 29th St. North, Wichita

**Check your email and
ksabolition.org for more
information soon!**

From the Board Chair...

by Donna Schneweis

On September 21st, the state of Georgia executed Troy Davis despite strong doubt about his guilt. Pleas for clemency raised by conservatives such as former Georgia Congressman Barr and former FBI Director Sessions went unheeded. The US Supreme Court previously sent the case back because of innocence concerns but in the moment it counted most, they too refused to act.

The Davis case shows that once convicted, even significant doubt about guilt is not enough to stop an execution under our system.

You might think Kansas is immune from convicting the innocent. Most recently, the \$7.5 million settlement to Eddie Lowery for his wrongful rape conviction in Riley County reminds us that innocent people are at risk in Kansas too. Right now, there are multiple homicide cases in the Kansas courts where someone has been convicted, yet serious doubts about their guilt remain.

There is only one real safeguard against executing an innocent person in Kansas—repeal the death penalty.

With your help, ending the Kansas death penalty would make our state's criminal justice system stronger in two ways. First, without the death penalty, offenders would be sentenced to life in prison without absolutely no possibility of parole – keeping the most violent offenders from ever being released. Second, a life sentence in prison without parole allows for mistakes to be corrected. If it was determined that a convicted person was actually innocent, then Kansas could release them. *We would never have to live with the fact that our state executed an innocent person.*

Now is the time for all of us to strengthen our efforts in support of abolition.

Please join us in taking one of the following actions to end the Kansas death penalty:

- Attend the Nov. 5th **Rally for Repeal** in Wichita to get the tools you need to be a powerful advocate for abolition.
- Write a letter to your legislators and the Governor asking them to end the Kansas death penalty.
- Recruit your friends and neighbors to the cause.
They can sign up on our website at www.ksabolition.org/join.
- If you aren't on our email list, send us an email at info@ksabolition.org so that we may contact you with breaking information about the effort to repeal the death penalty.

The 2012 legislative session is nearly here. This is our chance to change Kansas for the better. **Please take a step today to ensure that the Kansas death penalty is replaced in 2012!**



Faith Leader Calls on Governor Brownback to Repeal the Kansas Death Penalty in 2012.

Re: Abolish the Death Penalty in 2012

Pastor Peter Goerzen recently published a letter he sent to Governor Brownback, calling on the Governor to make replacing the death penalty a priority for 2012.

The letter, which can be read in full at <http://www.breadoftomorrow.org/2011/08/death-penalty-a-letter-to-governor-brownback/>, lists the following four reasons that Governor Brownback should replace the Kansas death penalty with life without parole in 2012:

1. The Death Penalty is poor fiscal responsibility. A 2003 legislative report found that cases resulting in a death sentence have a median cost 70% higher than that of non-death penalty murder cases. The life-without-parole sentence offers the same public protection without the additional fiscal strain. In a climate of budget shortfalls and major spending cuts, it is disturbingly ironic that programs and institutions promoting life, hope, and future are being cut, while the costly death penalty remains untouched...This funding could be invested so much better elsewhere: community development, support for victims' families, restorative justice that truly rehabilitates previous offenders before they commit more serious crime, teachers and community leaders who invest themselves in the

lives of children, etc. – initiatives to improve life rather than destroy it.

2. The Death Penalty distorts and cheapens justice. There is no convincing evidence that the death penalty is a deterrent against violent crime. With its bias against poor people, minorities, and certain locations, the death penalty distorts justice. Moreover, the death penalty cheapens justice by trading its noble claims for those of a much different desire: retribution.

We do ourselves and our culture a great disservice when we confuse justice with retribution.

Justice puts an end to cycles of violence through restoration and healing, while retribu-

We know that “an eye for an eye” does not represent the fullness of God’s desire for humankind.

-Pastor Peter Goerzen

tion merely continues the cycles of our murderous desire. We know that “an eye for an eye” does not represent the fullness of God’s desire for humankind. Some suggest that the death penalty brings justice by providing closure for victims families, but lengthy legal processes in

(Continued on page 4)

(Feature...Continued from page 3)

which families persistently relive their trauma do not provide closure, and the death penalty does not bring justice...Vengeance can never bring justice; the closest we can come is to offer our steadfast compassion and love to victims' families while ensuring that perpetrators may not murder again (e.g. life without parole).

3. The Death Penalty is morally bankrupt. Its oft-cited inner logic of "killing people because killing people is wrong" skews morality toward revenge and formally contributes to a culture of vengeance and death. It does not honor the conviction that all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore within God's sovereign purposes and ability to redeem. Public policy should not stand in the way of that possibility. Denominations and organizations from across the Christian tradition have articulated their moral, Biblical, and theological opposition to the death penalty.

4. The life without parole sentence adequately accomplishes the State's task to restrain evil, ensuring that violent offenders may never murder again. It honors God's sovereign privilege to act redemptively, both in victims' families' lives for healing and hope, and in offenders' lives for repentance and transformation. Unlike the death penalty, it at least provides the opportunity for the State to seek reparation in the case of wrongful conviction and punishment. It is a far less costly process, and eases the burden on victims' families, who must relive their trauma throughout the appeals process. While this sentencing option, like the death penalty, does not offer any corrective to pre-

dice in the legal system and does not work to disrupt the conditions that lead to violent crime, it does offer a significant fiscal, moral, and just alternative to the death penalty. Americans favor life in prison plus work with earnings going to victims' families over the death penalty by a factor of two-to-one.

As a faith leader, I commit myself to the work of sustainable community development, character formation, compassion for victims and all who suffer, and love for enemies. I hope that you also will take this opportunity to move our State away from policies of death, and toward initiatives for life, preventing violent crime before it happens by minimizing its causes.

Sincerely,

Pastor Peter Goerzen

Grace Hill Mennonite Church (Member, Western District Conference of Mennonite Church USA)

DONATE

Troy Davis' execution reminds us that the work of abolition is vital.

KCADP staff, board, and volunteers work each day to help make sure that Kansas is getting closer and closer to that goal. We invite you to partner with us in this work by making a tax deductible contribution.

You can send it to PO Box 2065, Topeka, KS 66601 or click on the "Donate" link on our website www.ksabolition.org.

Thanks to those who have donated already!

KCADP in Action

Over the summer, KCADP has been busy participating in more than 25 events. Here's a snapshot of some of the many events KCADP has been involved with:

- In June, KCADP attended two major festivals in Wichita and Kansas City, and the annual assembly for the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- In July, KCADP brought Bess Klassen-Landis to give a series of talks about her experiences as a murder victim family member and her opposition to the death penalty.
- In August, KCADP had a booth at the Crawford County Fair and attended an NAACP meeting.
- In September, KCADP brought murder victim family speakers to Emporia and Prairie Village, two exonerees to speak in Lawrence and Overland Park, and helped host a film showing in Wichita.

We are gearing up to have even more events this fall. Please check out the box (right) to see what upcoming events we have planned for the next few months.

The best way to keep up-to-date on KCADP is to receive our emails. If you don't receive emails from KCADP, you can sign up for email alerts by contacting KCADP at 785-235-2237 or email us at info@ksabolition.org.

Know of an event KCADP should attend? Contact us and let us know!

*Don't see an upcoming event in your area?
Help us schedule one!*

Contact KCADP to invite a speaker to your club, church or other group.

KCADP members in Wichita take to the streets in reaction to the execution of Troy Anthony Davis on September 21, 2011.

Photo by Bub Powell

KCADP Calendar:

October 10: World Day Against the Death Penalty

October 21-22: KCADP is tabling at the Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas Conference in Dodge City

October 28-29: KCADP is tabling at Amnesty International Conference in Kansas City

October 30: Bill Lucero of MVFR is speaking at Colonial Church, 7039 Mission Road, Prairie Village @ 11am.

November 5: KCADP "Rally for Repeal" at Wichita State University Metroplex, 5015 E. 29th St. North

November 6: KCADP public meeting @2pm. Salina Public Library

November 13: KCADP public meeting @3:30pm. ECM, Kansas State University in Manhattan.





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P.O. Box 2065
Topeka, KS 66601
(785) 23-KCADP
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www.ksabolition.org
info@ksabolition.org

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*Why do we kill people
who kill people
to show that
killing people is wrong?*

Find us on FACEBOOK!
www.facebook.com/kcadp

If you want to receive your newsletter via email, please use the form below. If you enjoy the newsletter and want to support the anti-death penalty effort financially, please use the form below to send a donation. Make checks out to: **KCADP**. Our address is: P.O. Box 2065, Topeka, KS 66601. *We thank you for your support!* KCADP now accepts PayPal! Visit our new website at www.ksabolition.org to contribute today!

<p><u>Please send my newsletter by email:</u></p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>EMAIL: _____</p> <p>STREET ADDRESS: _____</p> <p>CITY: _____</p> <p>COUNTY: _____</p> <p>ZIPCODE: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p>	<p><u>I would like to donate to KCADP:</u></p> <p>ENCLOSED FIND \$ _____</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>STREET ADDRESS _____</p> <p>CITY: _____</p> <p>ZIPCODE: _____</p> <p>PLEASE SEND ME A TAX RECEIPT _____</p> <p>(Please note that we are a 501c3 not for profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.)</p>
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