But murder victim families want the death penalty, don’t they?

Two of the founders of the Abolitionist Action Committee’s Annual Fast & Vigil are, in fact, murder victim family members who reject the death penalty. Stop by and meet Bill Pelke, whose grandmother was murdered by four teenage girls, one of whom became the youngest female on death row in the United States. Or talk to Marietta Jaeger-Lane, whose daughter was murdered. Other family members of murder victims, as well as death row family members and death row survivors are with us at this event. As two of the three initiators of the Annual Fast & Vigil, along with Rick Halperin, Bill and Marietta welcome you!

“...From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death.”
Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun, February 22, 1994

Until this time, Blackmun was a supporter of the death penalty. He spent more than 20 years trying to make it work. He couldn’t. In April, 2008, Justice Kennedy wrote (in Baze v. Rees) that he also has changed his mind. Do you know enough about the practice of the death penalty to decide whether or not you support it? See inside!

LA PENA DE MUERTE
Es Racista
No es un impedimento contra la violencia
Se dirige contra los pobres
Es más costosa que la cadena perpetua
No regresa la vida de las víctimas
Mata a inocentes
Enseña al mundo la venganza
Es un abuso de los derechos humanos
¡RENÚNCIALA!

WHY END THE DEATH PENALTY?

Whether you are FOR or AGAINST the death penalty – or still not sure – take the time to learn about how the criminal justice system actually works in the United States.

PLEASE JOIN US HERE AT THE U.S. SUPREME COURT JUNE 29 THROUGH JULY 2 EACH EVENING AT 6:00 P.M. FOR SPECIAL SPEAKERS WHO TALK FROM EXPERIENCE....
**GET THE FACTS, THEN DECIDE:**

- **INNOCENCE:** The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is constitutional to execute an INNOCENT person - as long as they had a "fair" trial (Herrera v Collins)! Consider that over 140 wrongly convicted persons released from death row so far since 1972 were ALL considered to have received "fair" trials! Should the government really be trusted with the power to kill?

- **WRONGFUL EXECUTIONS:** U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia once wrote that there has not been "a single case - not one - in which it is clear that a person was executed for a crime he did not commit. If such an event had occurred in recent years, we would not have to hunt for it; the innocent's name would be shouted from the rooftops." Some of the nation's best investigative journalists and leading newspapers have recently exposed grave errors leading to the execution of innocent people. Read about Carlos De Luna, Larry Griffin, Ruben Cantu, and Todd Willingham. In 2011, the case of Duane Buck brought worldwide attention to possible execution of the innocent. Was Justice Scalia wrong?

- **COST:** It costs 2 to 6 times as much to kill one person than to incarcerate for life. (I want to finish with the words carved into the front of the building: "Equal Justice Under Law."

- **NO DETERRENCE:** Most death penalty proponents concede that executions do NOT deter others from committing murder. In fact, studies show that the murder rate increases slightly after a highly publicized execution. States without the death penalty consistently have lower murder rates - as do countries throughout the world which have abolished the death penalty.

- **A POLITICIAN'S TOOL:** Politicians often brag that they are "tough on crime" because they support the death penalty. This is an effective sound bite, but it's not factual. If they were truly tough on crime they'd use your tax dollars to PREVENT crime - not one - in which it is clear that a person was executed for a crime he did not commit. If such an event had occurred in recent years, we would not have to hunt for it; the innocent's name would be shouted from the rooftops." Some of the nation's best investigative journalists and leading newspapers have recently exposed grave errors leading to the execution of innocent people. Read about Carlos De Luna, Larry Griffin, Ruben Cantu, and Todd Willingham. In 2011, the case of Duane Buck brought worldwide attention to possible execution of the innocent. Was Justice Scalia wrong?

- **PUBLIC OPINION:** Surveys consistently show that - when offered the alternative of life without the possibility of parole for a minimum of 25 years, plus restitution for the victim's family - support for the death penalty drops below 50%.

- **RACISM:** Shouldn't the "ultimate penalty" be applied fairly, without regard to race or class? Well, it isn't. When the race of the VICTIM is white, the perpetrator of the crime is 4 to 11 times MORE likely to receive a death sentence. In McCleskey v. Kemp, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racism in the legal system is "inevitable," and declined to do anything about it. Think about that as you contemplate the words carved into the front of the building: "Equal Justice Under Law."

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- **THE TIDE IS TURNING:** 18 states and the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty already. In recent years, those states have included Maryland, Connecticut, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey and New York. Who will be next?

- **EDUCATE YOURSELF:** See the suggested readings and websites below. There is a wealth of information in books and on the internet. Research the issue to see if what you believe about the death penalty is actually true.

- **USE YOUR CITIZENSHIP:** If you are U.S. citizen vote for candidates who support abolition of the death penalty. WRITE to elected officials (regardless of party affiliation) and ask them to consider alternatives to the death penalty.

- **BE VISIBLE:** Wear the message on a button or a shirt. Put a sticker on your car and in your office. Plant seeds and spark conversations about the death penalty. For merchandise, visit shop.amnestyusa.org.

- **SIGN A PETITION or WRITE A LETTER:** Sign a petition for a "time out" on executions or write letters or emails for clemency in upcoming scheduled executions, no matter what state or country you live in. For online actions, visit www.ncadp.org.

- **ASK YOUR RELIGIOUS LEADER TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE:** Almost every organized religion is opposed to the death penalty. Ask your church or spiritual leader to address the issue from the pulpit, and/or in other organized discussion venues. Contact People of Faith Against the Death Penalty at 919-933-7567 or www.pfadp.org for related materials.

- **INVITE A SPEAKER WITH EXPERIENCE TO YOUR LOCAL GROUP:** Consider inspirational speakers on various aspects of this complex issue. Murder victim family members, death row survivors, and other informed speakers are available to come to your area. For more information call 800-973-6548.

- **JOIN A GROUP IN YOUR AREA:** Contact the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty at 800-973-6548 or go to www.ncadp.org to use its free referral service to find a state or national organization near you.

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**RECOMMENDED READING:**

- Among the Loudest of the Dead
  - David von Drehl

- Dead Man Walking
  - Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ

**WEBSITES:**

- www.ncadp.org
- www.deathpenaltyinfo.org
- www.journeytohope.org
- www.MVF.R.org
- www.MVFHR.org
- www.abolition.org

**GET INVOLVED!**

The Abolitionist Action Committee

We are an ad-hoc group of individuals committed to highly visible and effective public education for alternatives to the death penalty through nonviolent direct action.

Contact us to get involved or make a contribution to our efforts.

Abolitionist Action Committee
P.O. Box 89, Ghent, NY 12075
Call toll-free: 800-973-6548
www.ABOLITION.org