



OPEN LETTER FROM OHIO FAITH LEADERS TO OHIO POLICY MAKERS

Signers names to be listed alphabetically by last name when this open letter is publicized and presented at the upcoming OTSE Lobby Day at the Statehouse on April 12, 2016.

Dear [Members of the Ohio Legislature & Governor],

Reflecting the rich diversity of faith traditions and spiritual practices observed in Ohio, we stand together in expressing our deep concern about the status of the death penalty in Ohio. To be clear, some of us do not oppose capital punishment, and others among us would prefer to see it ended. We are united in seeking a criminal justice system that is both fair and accurate.

All of us want our society protected and dangerous criminals held accountable, but not in a way that treats offenders and victims differently based on skin color, geographic location of a crime, or in a way which does not consider mental culpability. We cannot accept the possibility of executing an innocent person.

As you know, the Ohio Supreme Court Joint Task Force on the Administration of Ohio's Death Penalty was appointed by the Chief Justice after it became clear that Ohio's capital punishment system falls short of the American Bar Associations' standards for fairness 93% of the time. This body was precluded from considering the efficacy of the death penalty itself. After more than two years of careful investigation and deliberation, the Joint Task Force issued its report and made 56 recommendations for change. While a few of the recommended reforms have been or are being addressed, there is much yet to be done.

The scriptures and sacred texts of all our faiths demand fairness, accuracy, and mercy at a threshold far higher than the law currently prescribes. There is no question in any of our minds that *if* Ohio is to continue to have a death penalty, it *must* be administered fairly. Therefore, as people of faith, we affirm our support for legislation implementing reforms recommended by the Ohio Supreme Court Joint Task Force on the Administration of Ohio's Death Penalty, and we urge you to take a leadership role in enacting these reforms this year.

Sincerely,

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Religious Title: _____

Congregation and/or Denominational Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

To endorse the letter and the bill, please fill out the form and return to Ohioans to Stop Executions. This letter may also be signed on-line at <http://action.otse.org/page/s/open-letter-from-ohio-faith-leaders>