



**The Interfaith Alliance  
of Iowa &  
Action Fund**

## **DEATH PENALTY**

The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund affirms:

- Civil laws that equitably protect all people are at the center of a civil society. A civilized society should not condone government-taking of a life.
  - It is highly likely that innocent individuals may be executed. Since 1973, 122 inmates on death row in 25 states have been exonerated.
  - The international community is moving toward abolition of the death penalty. Amnesty International reports that 122 countries are currently abolitionist in law or practice. In September 2005, Liberia was the latest country to abolish the use of the death penalty. In 2004, 97% of all known executions worldwide took place in China, Iran, Viet Nam and the United States.
  - A 2005 study in California found that defendants who killed whites were over 3 times more likely to receive the death penalty than those who killed blacks; 4 times more likely than those who killed Latinos. (Pierce & Radelet, Santa Clara Law Review, 2005)
  - A 2001 study in North Carolina showed the odds of the defendant receiving the death penalty increased by 3.5 times if the victim were white. (Boger & Unah, University of North Carolina, 2001)
  - In 96% of the states where there have been reviews of race and the death penalty, there was a pattern of either race-of-victim or race-of-defendant discrimination, or both. (Prof. David Baldus report to the ABA, 1998).
  
- Civil law must be effective in its protection of its citizens and residents.
  - Iowa's penalty for murder is life in prison without parole. As such, the death penalty is unnecessary in Iowa.
  - Credible studies indicate the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime; 84% of criminological experts reject the concept that the death penalty is a deterrent. (Radelet & Akers, 1996) According to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, in 2004 the southern region of the U.S. has the highest murder rate (6.6 per 100,000 people) and the highest percent of executions (80%). The Northeastern region has the lowest murder rate (4.2 per 100,000) and the lowest percent of executions (less than 1%).
  - Studies indicate it is more cost efficient to enforce a life in prison sentence than the overwhelming costs associated with carrying out a death penalty sentence. In Florida, enforcing the death penalty costs \$51 million a year above the cost to punish all first-degree murderers with life in prison without parole. Since 1976, the total cost is \$24 million for each of the 44 executions performed (over \$1 billion). (Palm Beach Post, January 4, 2000)

Based on the facts above and working in coalition with other faith and community organizations, The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund:

- **Opposes** all legislation in Iowa to reinstitute the death penalty, regardless of the limits set.

### *As a Matter of Faith...*

The American Friends Service Committee's Criminal Justice Program maintains a list of faith and ethical groups which are opposed to the death penalty. They include:

American Baptists, American Ethical Union, American Friends Service Committee, American Jewish Committee, Amnesty International, The Bruderhof Communities, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Church Women United, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends United Meeting, General Conference of General Baptists, General Conference of Mennonite Church, Moravian Church in America, YWCA, Orthodox Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), The Rabbinical Assembly, Reformed Church in America, Reorganized Church, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and the United States Catholic Conference.

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*The mission of The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund is to promote the positive and healing role of religion in public life by encouraging civic participation, facilitating community activism, and challenging political extremism based on religion.*

*Information and Statistics collected from [www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org), [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org), [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org), and "League of Women Voter Talking Points on the Death Penalty".*