



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3000

WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG

January 11, 2021

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

For the first time in 2020, the federal government executed more people than all fifty states combined. Unfortunately, three more federal executions are scheduled this month.

It is past time to end the federal death penalty once and for all. One vehicle to accomplish this is the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act (S. 2390 and H.R. 4052 in the 116th Congress). I ask you to support these efforts to abolish the death penalty in our laws for good.

When Pope Francis addressed a Joint Meeting of Congress in 2015, he called for a global abolition of the death penalty, noting that, "I am convinced that this way is the best, since every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes." Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI also called for an end to the death penalty in the United States and around the world.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has also long called for an end to the death penalty because it is an affront to human dignity, is racially and economically biased, and is often arbitrary based on location. Perhaps worst of all, more than 170 people have been wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death only later to be exonerated.

The terrible loss of the families of victims must be considered as well. So much energy and resources go into carrying out executions. We urge you to redirect these resources towards providing compassionate and professional assistance to the families of victims.

With modern prisons, we do not need the death penalty to keep us safe. We can accomplish justice without it and strengthen respect for the sacred dignity of every human life, which is so needed today. The Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act moves us towards this goal, and we urge you to support it.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Paul S. Coakley in black ink.

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development

Handwritten signature of Joseph F. Naumann in black ink.

Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of Kansas City
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities



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January 11, 2021

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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Archbishop of Oklahoma City
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