

27. Three days before this execution date, the 11th Circuit Court stayed the execution to consider a new appeal.

Will Troy Davis be the next innocent person saved from execution, or will he be the next innocent person executed? Does the death penalty serve any purpose, other than to do harm to everyone involved, and society in general? Does the death penalty even console the families of murder victims?

Not according to 63 family members of murder victims who stated, in a letter to the New Jersey Legislature: "We are family members and loved ones of murder victims. We desperately miss the parents, children, siblings, and spouses we have lost. We live with the pain and heartbreak of their absence every day and would do anything to have them back. We have been touched by the criminal justice system in ways we never imagined and would never wish on anyone. Our experience compels us to speak out for change. Though we share different perspectives on the death penalty, every one of us agrees that New Jersey's capital punishment system doesn't work, and that our state is better off without it."

Or more specifically stated by Vicki Schieber whose daughter, Shannon, was raped and murdered, "The death penalty is a harmful policy that exacerbates the pain for murdered victims' families."

Some argue that the death penalty is a deterrent to murder, yet more than a dozen studies published in the past 10 years have been inconclusive on its deterrent effect. In testimony before the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights of the United States Senate Judiciary Committee in February 2006, Richard Dieter, Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center, testified that states without a death penalty statute have significantly lower murder rates than their counterparts with the death penalty. Mr. Dieter also testified that of the four geographic regions in the U.S., the South, which carries out 80% percent of all executions in the country, has the highest murder rate. Conversely, the Northeast, which implements less than 1 percent of all executions, has the lowest murder rate in the nation.

Even those who believe the death penalty can act as a deterrent admit that existing research has inconclusive results. Professor Erik Lillquist of Seton Hall University School of Law testified that recent econometric studies conclude that the death penalty can act as a deterrent, but only if the death penalty is implemented in a "sufficient" number of cases. Conversely, he also maintained that other studies suggest that executions can cause a "brutalization effect," in which the murder rate actually increases.

Professor Lillquist stated: "It just may be impossible to know what the deterrent or brutalization effect is here . . . at least as an empirical matter—simply because we're never going to have a large enough database that can be removed from the confounding variables, such that we can come to a conclusion. When scientists run studies in general, we try to do it in a controlled environment. You can't do that with murders and the death penalty."

Jeffrey Fagan, Professor of Law and Public Health, Columbia University and Steven Durlauf, Kenneth J. Arrow Professor of Economics, University of Wisconsin-Madison wrote in a letter to the editor in the Philadelphia Enquirer on November 17, 2007: "Serious researchers studying the death penalty continue to find that the relationship between executions and homicides is fragile and complex, inconsistent across the states, and highly sensitive to different research strategies. The only scientifically and ethi-

cally acceptable conclusion from the complete body of existing social science literature on deterrence and the death penalty is that it's impossible to tell whether deterrent effects are strong or weak, or whether they exist at all."

The professors concluded: "Until research survives the rigors of replication and thorough testing of alternative hypotheses and sound impartial peer review, it provides no basis for decisions to take lives."

While the death penalty inevitably executes the innocent, exacerbates the pain and suffering of families of murder victims and serves no penal purpose, the worse damage it does is to a society that believes it needs to seek revenge over redemption. The need for revenge leads to hate and violence. Redemption opens the door to healing and peace. Revenge slams it shut.

A society that turns its back on redemption commits itself to holding on to anger and a need for vengeance in a quest for fulfillment that can not be met by those destructive emotions. Redemption instead opens the door to the space that asks healing questions in the wake of violence: questions of crime prevention, questions of why some human beings put such a low value on life that they readily take it from others, questions that help us understand how to help those impacted by violence; questions that take a back seat, and are often ignored, when our minds and emotions are filled with a need for revenge.

Thirty-six states and the federal government of the United States still impose the death penalty. The United States has more human beings in prison and more violence than just about every other civilized country in the world. As long as we continue to choose revenge over redemption, it's likely we will continue to be a leader in the amount of violence and size of our prison population.

It doesn't have to stay that way.

When New Jersey abolished its death penalty, it chose redemption over revenge, healing over hate, peace over war. We need more states and our federal government to make those same choices.

Consider the following headlines which appeared side by side in the New York Times: "Iraqi Leaders Say the Way Is Clear for the Execution of 'Chemical Ali'." The other headline read: "Bomber at Funeral Kills Dozens in Pakistan."

Both Iraq and Pakistan have the death penalty. After the announcement setting the execution date for "Chemical Ali," San Jawarno, whose father and other family members were killed in attacks directed by "Chemical Ali" said, "Now my father is resting in peace in his grave because Chemical Ali will be executed."

The two events, the bombing in Pakistan and the words of the bereaved son whose father was killed, are not unrelated. We must speak up, at every forum, in our homes, our churches, synagogues, mosques and temples, in our legislative bodies, wherever an opportunity exists, to convince political leaders, community leaders, religious leaders, anyone who will listen, that the death penalty has no reason to exist, promotes violence, and brings peace to no one: in the grave or not.

That was to be the end of my plea to abolish the death penalty. Then I read a report from Amnesty International about the 13-year-old girl who was stoned to death in a stadium packed with 1000 spectators in Kismayo, Somalia. Her offense? Islamic militants accused her of adultery after she reported she had been raped by three men. Will this senseless, inhumane killing ever end?

Perhaps. The brutality of the death penalty and of Islamic militants can end, if we

speak out against it, wherever it exists, in any shape, in any form.

The death penalty is a random act of brutality. Its application throughout the United States is random, depending on where the murder occurred, the race and economic status of who committed the murder, the race and economic status of the person murdered and, of course, the quality of the legal defense.

I'm proud of the people of the State of New Jersey for electing political leaders who ended this random act of brutality. And I applaud Amnesty International for alerting the good people of the world to the brutality of the Islamic militants in Somalia who stoned to death that poor girl.

No good comes from the death penalty, whether it's imposed by duly elected governments, or by radical, religious fanatics. No good.

The burden of proof in the Court of Public Opinion should be on those advocating for the death penalty. That burden has not been met.

Just ask Byron Halsey. Or Troy Davis. Or, if you could, that 13-year-old girl.

HONORING THE NAACP ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 35, honoring the contributions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, and specifically to pay tribute to the Fort Wayne/Allen County Branch that serves the citizens of northeast Indiana.

As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the NAACP, it is important to take time to look back on its accomplishments. Throughout its history the NAACP has advanced the cause of civil rights and stirred the conscience of our nation. Madame Speaker, whether it was standing side by side with Rosa Parks, helping to outlaw the evil practice of lynching, or helping victims of Hurricane Katrina get back on their feet, the NAACP has stood as a "voice" and a "shield" for minority Americans.

Madam Speaker, from its humble beginnings in a hotel room across from Niagara Falls, to its current operations across the country, the NAACP has grown with our nation. Over the years, it has stayed true to its mission of eliminating racial hatred and racial discrimination.

In northeastern Indiana the NAACP, under the new leadership of the Reverend Bill McGill, has dedicated itself to improving the lives of local minority youth. Madam Speaker, in these difficult economic times the NAACP helps provide these youth with the opportunity they deserve and ensures the promise of our nation extends to all our citizens.

This past January I was pleased to host members of the local branch of the NAACP for the Presidential inauguration, and I was once again struck by their commitment to solving the problems facing our nation. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 35 and urge my colleagues to join me in praising the work of the NAACP and its members in northeast Indiana.

HONORING JOHN D. DINGELL FOR HOLDING THE RECORD AS THE LONGEST SERVING MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OR REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this resolution and to recognize my dear friend, JOHN DINGELL, on his lifetime of public service.

Over the last 53 years, JOHN DINGELL has stood larger than life. His dedication to his district, state and country has been a tremendous source of inspiration to me and my colleagues. I know that the United States of America is a safer, cleaner and healthier country because of his tireless efforts.

As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I have had the privilege of serving under Chairman DINGELL. As Chairman, his wisdom and judgment were only outdone by his kindness and generosity. I know that every member in this chamber is a better representative today because of the lessons we have learned from him.

In the 111th Congress, I look forward to continue working with, and learning from, JOHN DINGELL as he continues to fight for American families. This year we plan to work to provide universal health care, improve safety standards in toys, and find a solution to ad-

dress global climate change, and JOHN DINGELL will be a major factor in each of these efforts.

On a personal note I also deeply appreciate the friendship extended to me and my family by John and Debbie Dingell. They are always there for friends who need comfort and care. I congratulate and thank JOHN DINGELL for everything that he has and will accomplish in the years ahead.

CELEBRATING THE NATION'S MANUFACTURERS' MEETING IN CHATTANOOGA

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of an exciting event in Tennessee. Next week, the nation's manufacturing interests will gather in Chattanooga, Tennessee to discuss ways to provide U.S.-built products to support a nuclear energy renaissance. Job growth for electricity generation is already underway in Tennessee at Alstom's Chattanooga facility where 300 new jobs are expected to be added.

I congratulate Chattanooga's city leadership, the Tennessee-based sponsoring manufacturing companies, the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Nuclear Energy Institute on their commitment to job growth in

the nuclear industry. A single nuclear plant will create as many as 2,400 jobs during construction and 400 to 700 full-time, high-skill positions during its 60-year operating lifetime.

Electric power companies have filed federal permits to build up to 26 new nuclear plants. This list includes the Tennessee Valley Authority whose interests include potentially two new plants at the Bellefonte site in Northern Alabama. Based on statistics from the existing 104 U.S. nuclear power plants, each year, a new reactor will produce about \$600 million to federal, state and local governments in tax revenue and by expenditures in the economy for goods, services and labor. A four year construction schedule will also provide a substantial boost to suppliers of commodities and manufacturers of hundreds of components.

Recognizing the need for new electricity generation, especially in our region, TVA and other companies are also evaluating the benefits of new carbon-free electricity. The 104 nuclear power plants operating today in the United States produce three-quarters of our carbon-free electricity. Of the emission-free sources, nuclear energy has the most potential for large-scale expansion.

We face tremendous economic and energy challenges in Tennessee. Residents of Tennessee can benefit from deployment of carbon-free nuclear energy technology that creates jobs and stimulates the U.S. economy. I look forward to the progress in Tennessee's growing energy industry as our great country moves ever closer towards energy independence.