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*Former Assistant U. S. Attorney*

January 21, 2011

Hon. Pat Quinn  
Governor of Illinois  
207 State House  
Springfield, Illinois 62706

RE: Death Penalty Abolition Bill

Dear Governor Quinn:

We - a group of former state and federal prosecutors, judges, assistant attorneys general, and U.S. Justice Department lawyers - urge you to sign the death penalty abolition bill passed by the General Assembly.

We are deeply concerned, as we know you are, about public safety. But there simply is no credible evidence that the death penalty deters crime. Also, particularly given our state's severe budget problems, it is apparent that we are spending scarce public funds on a punishment that is flawed and rarely imposed. In the last decade, it has been reported that more than \$100 million has been expended from the Capital Litigation Trust Fund on pretrial investigations of some 500 potential capital cases . During that period, only 20 defendants have been sentenced to death and only 15 of those remain on death row. We are living in a time of fiscal crisis. Throughout Illinois, law enforcement officials are struggling to find needed dollars for police, forensic investigations, and aggressive prosecution of a wide range of criminal activity. The vast sums that would be spent on the death penalty in the years ahead are sorely needed for other, more effective law enforcement purposes.

It has been argued that we need the death penalty as a means of obtaining guilty pleas in exchange for life sentences, but using the death penalty as an instrument of coercion has led to false pleas and erroneous convictions. It also has been argued that we should retain the death penalty for particularly heinous crimes, such as multiple murder, murder of children, and murder of police officers. Limiting the death penalty to those cases, however, would not solve the underlying flaws that inevitably occur when the authorities are under pressure to win convictions in high-profile cases.

After a full and fair debate, our elected representatives have sensibly voted to end the death penalty. We urge you to sign the bill.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Giacchetti  
*Former Assistant U. S. Attorney*  
On behalf of herself and the following: