



Ravens Respect Life

House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee Hearing

February 13th, 2017

Testimony Submitted by Ravens Respect Life In Support of HB 2167, Abolishing the Death Penalty

We, the members of Ravens Respect Life, voice our support for ending the death penalty and replacing it with life in prison without parole. Motivated by a deep respect for human life, we are part of a growing number of college students and young people around our state and country committed to a consistent life ethic. For this reason, we strongly support HB 2167.

We do so because we firmly believe in the dignity of each individual human life from the moment of conception until natural death. Our consistent life ethic calls us to oppose all threats to human life, including the death penalty. Kansas has an opportunity to take an important step forward as a state and further promote a culture of life by passing HB 2167.

The history of the death penalty is one that has put innocent life at risk with troubling frequency. Since 1973, 157 individuals sentenced to death have been found innocent and exonerated. Because wrongful convictions are inevitable, the only way to prevent a wrongful execution is by ending the death penalty. This is an important reason why we oppose the death penalty in addition to all attacks on innocent human life, from abortion to euthanasia.

Today, with modern prisons and the sentence of life in prison without parole, executions are not needed to keep society safe. To take the life of a prisoner already removed from society is unnecessary and contrary to the basic principle that all life should be protected. We are told that we have a right to protect ourselves from harm, but isn't executing a person already contained in prison contrary to that belief? If we are already protected from them, we see no reason to continue allowing executions to occur in our state.

In conclusion, we believe the state has the right to maintain public order and exercise the right to punish criminals, but the state can accomplish this goal without resorting to the death penalty, and so we support HB 2167. We join other students and faculty in testifying that justice can be exercised by having criminals spend their lives in prison with the chance of redemption, as opposed to robbing that potential through an act of execution.

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