

February 22, 2010

Dear _____:

I am writing this letter, along with thousands of other men and women imprisoned all across this country, to ask that your organization stop supporting the sentence of life without the possibility of parole as an acceptable "alternative" to the death penalty.

Life without the possibility of parole is the death penalty.

I know that many death penalty abolitionist groups believe that it is not politically viable to seek to stop all forms of the death penalty. I also know that many of these groups don't agree that life without parole is the death penalty, at all.

You are wrong on both counts. Support for the death penalty continues to shrink. The public, more and more, are accepting the proposition that rehabilitation is a real possibility. Your support for life without parole is morally inconsistent and undermines your own position. If executing humans is wrong, then condemning them to a long, slow death in prison must also be wrong. And, yes, a long, slow death in prison is a death sentence. To argue otherwise is morally disingenuous, at best.

Why not adopt a true and complete opposition to the death penalty? Why not argue in favor of humanity? Why not move forward with the times and stop fighting with outmoded positions?

On behalf of the more than 40,000 men and women sentenced to die by incarceration, I ask that you and your organization adopt a consistent opposition to all forms of the death penalty.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

cc: The Other Death Penalty Project

January 25, 2010

Dear _____:

I am writing this letter, along with thousands of other men and women imprisoned all across this country, to ask you to reconsider your support for the sentence of life without the possibility of parole; what we in prison call "the other death penalty."

The truth is life without parole is the death penalty, but of a much more protracted and cruel nature. I am on death row now, but I haven't received the procedural safeguards those sentenced to death by execution are guaranteed. Instead, I am condemned to death by incarceration without any heightened scrutiny of my conviction, or the circumstances surrounding the crime for which I was sentenced to this lone, slow death.

Surely, everyone in this country should, at least, have a chance at rehabilitation, a chance to remake their life. It is a part of our cultural heritage.

In your future dealings with crime and punishment, I ask that you consider a different approach, one that allows for the possibility that all humans retain within themselves the spark of redemption. Life without parole is, ultimately, a denial of humanity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

cc: The Other Death Penalty Project