



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

April 5, 2011

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol Building, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The League of Women Voters of California requests that you convert the sentences of all prisoners who are awaiting execution in California from death to life without the possibility of parole. Eliminating the death penalty is ethically sound and will help save money for the vital programs that serve people's basic needs.

California's death row costs \$126 million a year beyond the cost of imprisoning convicts for life. Cutting costs by eliminating the death penalty and mandating permanent imprisonment for the inmates on death row makes sense at a time when there is an urgent need to cut unnecessary spending from all parts of the state budget.

All Californians are concerned about our state's growing budget gap and the need to reduce costs and raise revenue. As more and more necessary government services face cuts, the state must re-evaluate its budget priorities. "Cutting" the death penalty will save California \$1 billion over five years without releasing a single prisoner. Permanent imprisonment provides swift and certain justice for victims' families, avoiding the agonizing delays caused by decades-long appeals and the illusory promise of execution.

In the past, the state has prioritized funding for the death penalty above crime prevention and victims' services. Los Angeles is denying overtime funding for homicide investigators, Oakland is laying off police officers, and 45 percent of all homicides statewide go unsolved. Last year, \$50 million was cut from the Victims Compensation Fund. Yet despite these cuts to law enforcement and victims' services, the state continues to pay \$126 million annually for its death penalty system. Let's find a better use for this money.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janis R. Hirohama".

Janis R. Hirohama
President

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