

May 28, 2009

The Honorable M. Jodi Rell
The State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

I write to implore you not to veto the legislation abolishing the death penalty in Connecticut.

As the Conference Minister of the United Church of Christ in Connecticut, I serve the oldest and largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut.

I want to be sure that you know that the delegates to our Annual Meeting have repeatedly voted for the repeal of the death penalty over the past 25 years. We believe that its presence among our statutes represents a deep moral flaw in the character of our state.

You have said that you believe some crimes so heinous that the only suitable punishment is death. I understand your impetus in that direction. But I am honor bound to present a different perspective: no good is served for anyone – not for victims' families, not for criminal justice, and not for the young minds whose character is formed by the actions of our state – by arrogating to ourselves the taking of life in this way. All we do is perpetuate the cycle of violence. It is morally wrong.

Individuals must live with the consequences of their deeds. Those who commit such crimes should not be allowed to take the easy way out. We are all human; prosecutors, witnesses, juries, judges and governors make mistakes, for which we will all be held accountable ultimately. Killing prisoners can rarely be done with certainty of their guilt and their sanity.

You have heard the arguments. I write to remind you that we of the religious leadership in Connecticut speak with one voice in opposition to the death penalty, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim. Yes, you can find individuals here and there who take a different position, but we who lead are virtually in unanimous agreement on this issue. Please sign that legislation and restore our moral compass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Foy Crabtree". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
Conference Minister