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**Testimony before the General Assembly Judiciary Committee
March 4, 2009**

**In Support of Proposed Bills: H.B. 6578 - "An Act Concerning The Penalty For A
Capital Felony"**

We, Sister Mary Alice Synkewecz, RSM and Sister Linda Pepe, CSJ, the Director and Associate Director of the Collaborative Center for Justice, speaking on behalf of the six congregations of women religious who sponsor our Center, and our membership of approximately 800 women religious and their associates, add our voices to the growing numbers of individuals and organizations in the State of Connecticut that support the elimination of the Death Penalty.

We support the aforementioned bill because the death penalty, the premeditated and "legal" execution of a person, is simply wrong for us, as civilized individuals and as a community. The long drawn out process of appeals to arrive at the court-sanctioned killing of another individual, diminishes our respect for life, and for the families of the victims, who must suffer through numerous legal appeals.

The death penalty is not a deterrent, but the execution is final, and we must acknowledge that mistakes are possible. As long as mistakes remain a possibility, and exonerations continue, the death penalty should be abolished.

Neither is the death penalty an appropriate means of "retribution" as some proponents of the death penalty claim. All too frequently, the arguments heard to impose the death penalty sound more like justifications for seeking "revenge." This is an inappropriate use of our Judicial System, and we oppose the use of laws and our courts as instruments of revenge. We further oppose the wasting of valuable resources that could be applied toward preventing violence and/or meeting the needs of those affected by violent acts.

We ask the members of the Judiciary Committee to allow the debate to go forward. We state unequivocally, "Do Not Kill in Our Name!"