



HOLY APOSTLES COLLEGE & SEMINARY

33 Prospect Hill Road

Cromwell, Connecticut 06416-2005

Tel. (860) 632-3010 · Fax: (860) 632-3030

**Testimony of Holy Apostles College and Seminary
Submitted to the Judiciary Committee**

Monday, March 7, 2011

Good Afternoon Senator Eric Coleman, Representative Gerald Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is James F. Papillo and I am a faculty member at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut where I also hold the position of Vice President of Administrative Affairs. I am also an ordained, permanent deacon with the Archdiocese of Hartford. With me is Ken Dagliari, a seminarian at Holy Apostles sponsored by the Archdiocese of Hartford. On behalf of the 55 seminarians who signed their names to our written testimony, we thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

Raised Senate Bill No.1035: An Act Repealing the Death Penalty

We are here today to strongly urge you to take steps to end the use of the death penalty in Connecticut.

Our nation's founding documents affirm the right to life. As a matter of principle, the government should only end a human life if it is absolutely necessary to protect society. Today, sentences such as "life in prison without the possibility of release" make it possible to protect society without having to kill the convicted person. If, as a society, we want to establish that killing is wrong, we cannot do it by killing people who kill people.

Recent studies and new technologies have provided strong evidence against the use of the death penalty. At least 130 people from 26 states have been exonerated from death row after evidence of innocence was found. Studies in state after state have shown that the death penalty is more costly than alternative sentences. There is also strong evidence that in many states the death penalty is applied unfairly. Further, there exists little, if any, convincing empirical evidence showing that the death penalty has any deterrent effect on the commission of future violent crimes.

In debating the death penalty, we believe it is important to move behind questions of deterrence, retribution, public safety, sentencing, equity, and the execution of innocent persons, and to get to the heart of the matter which revolves around four related values that would be promoted by abolishing the death penalty.

First, abolition sends a message that we can break the cycle of violence, that we need not take life for life, that we can envisage more humane and more hopeful and effective responses to the growth of violent crime. The teachings of the Catholic Church recognize that crime is rooted in the complex reality of contemporary society, including those "social conditions of poverty and injustice which often provide the breeding grounds for serious crime." More attention should go to correcting the root causes of crime than to enlarging death row.

Second, abolition of capital punishment is also a manifestation of our belief in the unique worth and dignity of each person from the moment of conception, a creature made in the image and likeness of God. This belief, rooted in Scripture and consistently expressed in the social teachings of the Church, applies to all people, including those who have taken life.

Third, abolition of the death penalty is further testimony to our conviction, a conviction which we share with the Judaic and Islamic traditions, that God is indeed the Lord of life. And so human life in all its stages is sacred, and human beings are called to care for life, that is, to exercise good stewardship and not absolute control. The Catholic Church recognizes that abortion, euthanasia and the death penalty are not the same issue, but they each point to the same fundamental value: safeguarding the sanctity of life.

Fourth, we believe that abolition of the death penalty is most consonant with the example of Jesus. In many ways this final point summarizes the other three: the God revealed in the life of Jesus is a God of forgiveness and redemption, of love and compassion—in a word, a God of life. The heart of the Catholic faith's position on the death penalty, then, is found in the Gospel.

As seminarians and as faithful Catholic Christians, we have a commitment to defending the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. We struggle mightily against abortion; we have a commitment and concern for the poor; we deplore racial and sexual discrimination and the self-destructive use of drugs. Our position against the use of the death penalty falls into that continuum. We believe that an issue such as capital punishment is not just a question of public policy, but is at its very core a moral issue, and therefore a religious issue, and we must speak to it.

Gut-level reactions may cry out for vengeance, but Jesus' example in the Gospels invites all to develop a new and different attitude toward violence. The Church encourages all of us, including members of this legislature, to embody Jesus' message in practical and civic decisions.

We can help end the culture of violence that impacts so many of our communities by demonstrating that we will not end a human life if we have alternative means to protect society from violent crime. We urge you to work to end the use of the death penalty in Connecticut.

Toward this end, we respectfully request that members of this committee **SUPPORT Raised Bill No. 1035** and to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

We the undersigned seminarians at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut urge SUPPORT for Raised Senate Bill No. 1035: An Act Repealing the Death Penalty to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut.

Kenneth D Agliere	John K Feller
Benjamin DeMunnin	Br. Andy Cavallo
Cecil R. Fritch	Charles W. Brodeur
Ulan Bastarache	Rev. Douglas Mosey
T. Prady	Br. Youssef-Mariam Hanna
Thomas M. [Signature]	Edw. "Skip" Brown
Don Robert P. Seltzer	Reverend Mother Russell Hornie
J. K. [Signature]	Michael R. Darch
Sister Mary Anne Linder	Fr. Berdard De
ALEXANDER ABRAHAM JOSEPH	Jasper Figgie
Br. Marc Beausse	John McNamara
Roman Loezdan	Joseph P. Kirchner
KHOIDO	[Signature]
Antoine Kairouy	[Signature]
Br. Robinson	Conrad
BRO. RAFAEL J. PEREZ	Br. Nathan Caswell, SSC
Br. Peter LeDo	Br. Robert Bryson
LUIS HENRY Agudelo.	Thomas Held
Br. Laurence Mary	Jan' Cochenour
Br. Milton Cueto.	Lawrence Ryan

We the undersigned seminarians at Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut urge
SUPPORT for Raised Senate Bill No. 1035: An Act Repealing the Death Penalty to abolish the death
penalty in Connecticut.

George Ninko.	
J.C. Phil Ninko	
Danh Van Pham	
David Kim	
Bret	
Wend	
Lam Nguyen	
Joseph	
Tom	
Walter	
Michael Curran	
John	
Br. Michael Mary. K HE	
Scott Theberge	
David	