



**CGA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
MARCH 7, 2011 PUBLIC HEARING**

**Support for:**

**SB 1035 AA REPEALING THE DEATH PENALTY  
HB 6425 AA REVISING THE PENALTY FOR CAPITAL OFFENSES**

**Comments submitted by Ellen W. McBride, Death Penalty Specialist**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut appreciates the opportunity to comment today on SB 1035 and HB 6425 which would replace the death penalty in capital felony cases with life imprisonment without the possibility of release. We urge your support for these bills.

The League believes that capital punishment should not be a sentencing option for murder or any other crime. A sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release is punishment that ensures public safety without raising the many complex problems associated with the death penalty. Until the death penalty in Connecticut is abolished, the League supports an immediate moratorium on executions.

During the League's 2006 state study of the death penalty the following points were made:

- The death penalty costs more than life imprisonment without parole. The General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis estimates that the death penalty costs the state of Connecticut four million dollars a year to maintain.
- The death penalty causes additional harm to murder victims' families by subjecting them to years of media attention and replaying of the crime while appeals are made. This is not swift justice. The needs of these families are not met.
- Connecticut has convicted innocent people of murder. It takes years to undo such convictions if it can be done.
- The death penalty as a deterrent is not provable.
- The death penalty is not applied fairly and consistently without regard to race, gender, socio-economics or geography.

The League *strongly supports* both SB 1035 and HB 6425. SB 1035 would abolish the death penalty and make life in prison without the possibility of parole the maximum sentence. HB 6425 would amend the general statutes to replace the death penalty with a penalty of life imprisonment without the possibility of release for certain murders committed on or after the effective date of the act. Both bills would provide for prospective abolition of the death penalty. The League of Women Voters of Connecticut urges you to vote YES on these bills.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on these important bills.