The Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.”

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY ...

BUT IS THAT ENOUGH?

DEATH PENALTY ACTION WEEKS

FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 10, 2013

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Our Mission: We are individuals from across the world standing up together for human rights. Our purpose is to protect people wherever justice, freedom and dignity are denied. We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilize the public to create a safer and more just world. We received the Nobel Peace Prize for our life-saving work in 1977.

Our Vision: Our vision is of a world in which every person - regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnicity and other distinctions - enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

Our History: Founded in 1961, our organization has campaigned successfully for the International Criminal Court and a UN Convention against Torture. Through our research and action, governments have been persuaded to stop human rights violations and change their laws and practices. Death sentences have been commuted. Torturers have been brought to justice. And prisoners of conscience have been released.

Our Organization: Amnesty International has a varied network of members and supporters around the world. At the latest count, there were more than 2.2 million members, supporters and subscribers in over 150 countries and territories in every region of the world. Although they come from many different backgrounds and have widely different political and religious beliefs, they are united by a determination to work for a world where everyone enjoys human rights.

AI is a democratic, self-governing movement. Major policy decisions are taken by an International Council made up of representatives from all national sections. AI's national sections, like AI USA, and local volunteer groups are primarily responsible for funding the movement. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for AI's work investigating and campaigning against human rights violations.

JOIN US!

Become a member of Amnesty International today! Join us in the struggle for universal human rights. Our network of members around the world is what makes us powerful. It’s easy! Just visit us at www.amnestyusa.org/join or call 1-800-AMNESTY
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INTRODUCTION TO DEATH PENALTY ACTION WEEKS

Thank you for joining us for two weeks of action and awareness raising on the death penalty!

From February 23 to March 10, 2013, AI student and local groups and other people of conscience will engage their campuses and local communities on this critical human rights issue.

Sit down with your group and have a look through this resource guide. Brainstorm activities you’d like to do; consider the resources, people power and time you have; then narrow down your ideas and make a plan that you can pull off. Please contact your State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator for support and information on what your state’s specific death penalty issues and needs are (p.9).

Whether you can put on a series of events, one big event, or a couple of smaller scale activities, your efforts are important and appreciated!

Use this guide and the resource people listed inside to help you figure out an achievable plan for your Action Weeks. Post the activities you’re planning to our website to increase visibility and help us gauge how the week is going across the country. Please give us feedback (p. 36) so we can learn how activities worked in various places, gain new ideas and improve our support.

Note: This year, we are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1963 Gideon v. Wainwright Supreme Court decision that promised all criminal defendants the right to a lawyer. (see p. 5-7) Please make plans well in advance! Many speakers need months notice for events and it can take several weeks to book venues, do outreach and solid promotion of the event.

Why AI Works to End the Death Penalty

The death penalty is the ultimate affront to human rights, violating the basic right to life. It is an irreversible cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It is often used for political, rather than constructive social, reasons. We work to end the death penalty around the world.

In the U.S., the application of the death penalty is marked by gross racial and economic bias, arbitrariness, and human error. It is very expensive (more than permanent imprisonment) and wastes resources that could be better used to prevent violence, support victims’ families, and foster prisoner rehabilitation.

Building Awareness—->Taking Action—->Creating Change!

The first step to creating change is raising awareness. The more people learn about the death penalty the less likely they are to support it. There are many reasons to oppose the death penalty. We must meet people where they are and share with them our understanding of the ugly realities of capital punishment and why the time for abolition has come. Because the state carries out executions in the name of its citizens, we have an ethical responsibility to understand this system and how it implicates us all. And we have an obligation to take action to end it.

IT’S TIME FOR CHANGE!

Did you know...

- Since 1973, 141 people have been exonerated from death rows across the U.S.
- About half of murder victims are people of color, but 77% of death row inmates’ victims were white.
- Cameron Willingham was executed in Texas in 2004 for murdering his children by burning down their home. New forensics disproves the prosecutor’s case and demonstrates that the fire should not have been ruled arson.
- The overwhelming majority of death row prisoners could not afford their own attorney at trial.
- It costs much more to execute someone than to permanently keep them in prison.
- Globally, the U.S. is one of the top five executing nations. 140 nations have ended executions.
**Gideon v. Wainwright and the Right to a Lawyer**

**WHAT IS GIDEON??**

On March 18, 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court – by a 9-0 vote in a case known as *Gideon v. Wainwright* – ruled that all criminal defendants have the right to a lawyer and that indigent defendants should have one provided for them. But the right to a lawyer, and the right to a *good* lawyer are two different things.

Fifty years later, our death rows are filled with prisoners who were let down by their attorneys. Claims of horrific childhood abuse or mental disability—which should be used to argue for sentences less than death—and even claims of innocence are often not effectively presented by defense lawyers who may be overworked, underpaid or simply not qualified.

In fact, it is fair to say that a top predictor of whether or not a defendant will get the death penalty is the quality of his or her lawyer.

*Gideon* was a great step forward, but its spirit, that every trial should be a level playing field between the prosecution and the defense, has not been realized, even in cases where life and death are at stake. Fixing this problem of inadequate representation would be hugely expensive, and the death penalty already costs more than alternative punishments. Add to that our new understanding of how mistake-prone our justice system can be (141 people have been exonerated from U.S. death rows since 1973), and it is clear that the irreversible punishment of death should not be used when we cannot guarantee a decent lawyer.

**COMMEMORATING GIDEON’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

We encourage groups to take advantage of this anniversary to organize events, panels, or teach-ins to educate their campuses and communities about the realities of our death penalty, and to deliver the hopeful message: “We can live without the death penalty”.

**WHERE TO FIND GOOD SPEAKERS**

In addition to the compelling speakers who are death row exonerees or murder victim family members (p. 13), here are some ideas for filling out a panel or program that discusses the legal issues raised in *Gideon* and that still exist in today’s flawed death penalty:

- Law schools (students or professors)
- Local defense attorneys
- American Constitution Society (ACS) Lawyer or Student Chapters - [http://www.acslaw.org/chapters](http://www.acslaw.org/chapters)
- Local ACLU Affiliates - [http://www.aclu.org/affiliates](http://www.aclu.org/affiliates)
In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a Florida case known as Gideon v. Wainwright, ruled that all criminal defendants, even the indigent, have a right to a lawyer. Here are some basic facts about that landmark decision:

- Oral arguments: January 15, 1963
- Decision released: March 18, 1963
- Vote: 9-0
- Fun Fact: Clarence Earl Gideon hand-wrote his petition to the Supreme Court!

Gideon followed a 1932 case, Powell v. Alabama (known as the Scottsboro Boys case), which guaranteed the right to counsel in capital cases with special circumstances, and was followed by the 1966 Miranda v. Arizona decision that guaranteed the right to counsel during police interrogation (“you have the right to an attorney” became part of the famous Miranda warning read by police upon arresting a suspect).

These promising developments affirming the right to a lawyer were followed by less promising rulings regarding how to determine if the lawyer provided was good enough. By the early 1990s, courts were saying things like:

“Although defense counsel slept during portions of the trial, counsel provided defendant meaningful representation.” ([People v. Tippins](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0372_0335_ZS.html), 1991)

“Proof of a defense counsel’s use of narcotics during trial does not amount to a per se violation of constitutional right to effective counsel.” ([Counsel admitted using heroin and cocaine throughout the trial.](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0372_0335_ZS.html)) (People v. Badia, 1990)

A year 2000 study in Texas found that in 25% of 461 capital cases, defendants were represented by lawyers who had “been disciplined for professional misconduct at some point in their careers. Others have been represented by court-provided attorneys who dozed during trials, failed to investigate their case or put in minimal preparation.”

A similar study in Washington state found that “one-fifth of the 84 people who have faced execution in the past 20 years were represented by lawyers who had been, or were later, disbarred, suspended or arrested.”

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**The Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution**

“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor; and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.”
Fifty years after *Gideon*, we have learned that having an ineffective lawyer is not much better than having no lawyer at all. Executions on prisoners who had inadequate legal representation continue, as unqualified lawyers fail to introduce “mitigating” evidence that could have convinced jurors to show mercy. Here are some examples:

**Harold McQueen**
During the penalty phase of his trial, his lawyers failed to present mitigating evidence. His attorney testified later that he didn’t even speak to McQueen’s family prior to the sentencing hearing. The jury never learned about the neglect and abuse McQueen suffered as a child because his lawyer failed to investigate. He was executed in Kentucky in 1997.

**Bobby Fields**
His lawyer had never handled a death penalty case before. She convinced him to enter a blind plea because of comments the judge had made to her that he would not seek a death sentence. Fields did as suggested, and was sentenced to death and executed in Oklahoma in 2003.

**Daniel Cook**
Cook was appointed a lawyer who at the time was suffering from bipolar disorder and drinking heavily. Cook waived his right to counsel, stating that he had believed that his options were to continue with a lawyer he viewed as incompetent or represent himself. The prosecutor recalled that Cook’s appointed trial lawyer was “at the low end of the competency scale” and “appeared neither capable nor willing to put forth the effort necessary to represent a defendant charged with a capital offense”. Cook was executed in Arizona in 2012.

**Samuel Lopez**
At his trial in 1987, Sammy Lopez was represented by a lawyer who had never handled a death penalty case before. He presented no evidence at the first stage of the trial and no witnesses at either stage. At his re-sentencing in 1990, Sammy Lopez was represented by another lawyer, who also failed to investigate his client’s family or life history. Lopez was also executed in Arizona in 2012.

**Executing the innocent**
The post-*Gideon* death penalty has also ensnared the innocent: 141 people have been exonerated from death row since 1973. Many others have been executed despite serious doubts about their guilt. For example, *Troy Davis* was represented during his state appeals by a resource center staffed by 2 attorneys representing 80 clients who could not do the work necessary to gather witness recantations casting serious doubts on his guilt. Once this evidence was gathered at a later stage, courts ruled that it should have been gathered earlier.
GENERAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

Be sure to include a sign-in sheet at all events and provide people with at least one tangible action (e.g. a petition) (p. 34, 35) For events focused on inadequate legal representation, law schools make great venues, and law professors or local criminal defense lawyers make good speakers.

- Host a speaker (p.15-22); Show a film (p.9-10)
- Create informational posters with facts, or quotes from prominent political figures, governors, or court rulings on why different states, nations, and individuals oppose the death penalty.
- Set up a large map of the US with big red pins for executions that have been carried out last year (use other colors for pending executions).
- Create a display featuring the flags of abolitionist nations or US states.
- Sidewalk Chalking Projects (some campuses may require permission)
- Utilize your campus newspaper, TV or radio to get the word out about events: pitch a discussion on a regular show, create a promo for an event, guest write an article, etc.
- DIY (do-it-yourself) giant posters: The Rasterbator is a online rasterization program that takes your photo or image file and produces a file that you can print out on a normal printer and then assemble into a large poster: http://arje.net/rasterbator
- Make grave-markers to put on a lawn representing those executed. This could be all US prisoners executed since 1976 (when the death penalty resumed after being deemed unconstitutional in 1972) or last year, those executed in your state, or those who were likely innocent (see: http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/executed-possibly-innocent)
- Set up tea-lights in white paper bags marked with the names of death row exonerees. (Be sure to have a descriptive placard explaining the display and some factsheets people can take away).
- Connect with faith-based groups in your community to host an interfaith event
- Ask a teacher if the death penalty can be a topic in an upcoming class. You may be able to find a relevant connection to the class syllabus. For example, English or Language Arts – a novel or play; History – a famous case in US history; Foreign Languages (pieces written in other languages on the subject); Math or Science – statistical studies (e.g. deterrence); Ethics; Religion; Philosophy and so forth.
- Set up a photographic exhibit (see p.25)
- Ask a theater group or department to consider a play, such as “The Exonerated” or “Dead Man Walking.” The Dead Man Walking School Theater Project uses the play adapted by Tim Robbins of Sr. Helen Prejean’s lauded book. The Project offers materials and is designed to be an interdisciplinary project, engaging a few subject departments at a school. Learn more at www.dmwplay.org/

(Photo: Group performing “Dead Man Walking”)

- Organize a panel discussion. We recommend a panel for people to explore the topic rather than a debate. Debates on charged issues can sometimes turn ugly or make people more wedded to their original ideas or opinions rather than make them think more openly. There are many different possible perspectives to include: religious, legal, historical, international, effectively dealing with violent crime, alternatives to the death penalty, victims’ families’ experiences and needs, and so forth. Provide time for Q&A.

- Social Networking – Facebook ... Connect with Al’s death penalty abolition Facebook Page, put facts about the death penalty in your status bar, change your profile photo with a death penalty image. Invite people to your activities through the events feature.

Do you have additional ideas? Let us know (p. 13)

LIST OF FILMS

There are several great films that are very illuminating about the death penalty and that bring the issues to life. Check with your Regional Office or DPAC (p. 13) if you’d like to borrow a copy of the film with an asterisk (*).

“After Innocence”
This documentary tells the true life, compelling stories of exonerated prisoners. It examines the trials and tribulations waiting for them upon their release from prison. It also examines the U.S. justice system and the flaws that led to the wrongful conviction of these men. 2005. 95 min.

“At the Death House Door” *
An investigation of the wrongful death of Carlos DeLuna, who was executed in Texas on December 7, 1989, after prosecutors ignored evidence inculpating a man, who bragged to friends about committing the crimes of which DeLuna was convicted. 2008.

“Dead Man Walking”
This acclaimed film traces the relationship between a death row inmate and the nun to whom he turns for spiritual guidance in the lead up to his execution. The film explores the brutality of the crime and the punishment without taking an overt abolitionist position. Starring Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon. 1995. 122 min.

“Deadline”
This documentary explores two of the most significant, yet unexamined, events in the history of American capital punishment - the abolition of the death penalty in 1972 and the momentous debate in Illinois in 2002 over clemency for all of the state’s death row inmates. DVD and discussion guide: www.deadlinethemovie.com. 2004. 90 min.
“Death by Fire”
Several controversial death penalty cases are currently under examination, but it’s the 2004 execution of Cameron Todd Willingham -- convicted for the arson deaths of his three young children -- that’s the center of the national debate. In Death by Fire, FRONTLINE gains unique access to those closest to the Willingham case -- meticulously examining the evidence used to convict Willingham, offering an in-depth portrait of those most impacted by the case, and exploring the explosive implications of the execution of a possibly innocent man. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/

“The Empty Chair” *
Four stories of murder victim’s families reliving the crimes and confronting the loss of loved ones. Reactions range from revenge and desire for punishment to searching for forgiveness and healing. With commentary by Sister Helen Prejean. 2003. 52 min. www.justiceproductions.org

“The Execution of Wanda Jean”
An unflinching investigation of the role that poverty, mental health, race, and sexuality play within the criminal justice system. Wanda Jean Allen was an attractive young woman with what many considered to be an appealing personality. She was also an African-American lesbian whose low IQ indicated borderline retardation. By the age of 29, Wanda Jean had killed twice - and would become one of the most controversial death-row inmates in recent history. 2004. 90 minutes. www.hbo.com/docs/programs/wanda

“The Exonerated” *
Susan Sarandon and Danny Glover star in this film based upon the stage play of the same name. Actual court depositions, transcripts, letters, and interviews comprise the chilling and moving script that chronicles the stories of six wrongly convicted death row inmates. 2005. 90 minutes.

“Interview with an Executioner” *
Behind the scenes in a Mississippi Penitentiary during 14 days leading up to the execution of Edward Earl Johnson. Don Cabana, the executioner, recounts the chilling experience of the execution of Johnson, who maintained his innocence until the end with his final words - “I want you to know exactly what you are doing when you execute me. I want you to remember every last detail, ‘cause I am innocent.” 14 min. Also available in Spanish.

“Juan Meléndez - 6446” *
Juan Meléndez was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. A Puerto Rican migrant farmer raised in New York City, Meléndez was accused of murder in Florida. Meléndez was convicted and put on death row for 17 years, before being exonerated. 49 min. Also available in Spanish.

“Race to Execution” *
By Rachel Lyon, this film follows the stories of two death row inmates and exposes how race infects America’s death penalty system. Tools and more information at www.pbs.org/independentlens/racetoexecution/. 2006. 54 min.

“The Thin Blue Line”
Through the use of reenactments of the crime, photo montages, film clips, and interviews, this is a reconstruction and investigation of the 1976 murder of a Dallas policeman and the subsequent arrest and sentencing to death of a man who claims to be innocent. 1988. 101 min.

“Too Flawed to Fix” *
A powerful documentary that exposes the irreparable flaws in the criminal justice system by examining the 13 individuals who were wrongfully convicted and released from Illinois’ death row. 2002. 1 hr. and 15 min. versions available. To order, email: tooflawedtofil@hotmail.com. Study guide also available.

“The Trials of Daryl Hunt”
This documentary offers a deeply personal story of a wrongfully convicted man who spent twenty years in prison (though not death row) in North Carolina for a crime he did not commit. 2006. 106 minutes. http://www.breakthrufilms.org/
INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

AIUSA’s Main Death Penalty Page:  www.amnestyusa.org/abolish
AIUSA’s Death Penalty Resource Page:  http://tinyurl.com/aidpres

- Death Penalty Fact Sheets

- Annual DP Stats Worldwide Report (release: March/April)
- Up-to-date List of Scheduled Executions
- Death Penalty Curriculum Guide

PowerPoint presentation, “Understanding the Death Penalty” (email DPAC@aiusa.org)

PowerPoint presentation, “You Have The Right To An Attorney” (email DPAC@aiusa.org)

Blog:  http://blog.amnestyusa.org/category/deathpenalty/

Useful Links:
- Excellent source on the U.S. death penalty:  Death Penalty Information Center www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Buttons Available:

Willingham stickers (“Executed. Innocent.”), “Live” stickers, and buttons, and Reggie buttons can be ordered from DPAC or your Regional Office (p.13)

Stickers Available:

RESOURCES PEOPLE

To make your event as good as possible, you should connect with other people and groups in your area. Here are people that can help.

Your State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator (SDPAC)
SDPACs are volunteer leaders who keep up with death penalty developments in their state. They have a lot of knowledge about the issue. They can help connect you to local speakers, share with you the focus of the work in your state and how you can get plugged in. Please contact your SDPAC to let them know you are organizing activities for the Action Weeks.

Your Field Organizer
Field Organizers are the primary staff supporters of activists. Your Field Organizer can help you access materials, connect you to other activists and assist you if you need help figuring out your activities.

The Death Penalty Abolition Campaign (DPAC) in the D.C. Office
DPAC can help you find materials and resources for your activities and answer your questions about the issues. Please contact your Field Organizer for support first, but let DPAC know if you have issue-specific needs.
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Are you interested in being an SDPAC? Let us know and we’ll send you info (email: bevans@aiusa.org).
REGIONS AND FIELD ORGANIZERS

**Mid-Atlantic Region**  
600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20003  
202-544-0200 Fax: 202-546-7142  
Julie Southwell (jsouthwell@aiusa.org): Delaware, Pennsylvania, Washington DC  
Jiva Manske (jmanske@aiusa.org): Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia

**Northeast Region**  
Cynthia Gabriel (cgabriel@aiusa.org): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont  
Thenjiwe McHarris (NY Office 212-633-4215, tmcharris@aiusa.org): New York, New Jersey

**Mid-West Region**  
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312-427-2060 Fax: 312-427-2589  
Ernest Coverson (ecoverson@aiusa.org): Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota  
Katie Sewell (ksewell@aiusa.org): Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin

**Southern Region**  
730 Peachtree St. Suite 1060, Atlanta, GA 30308  
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Savannah Fox (sfox@aiusa.org): Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi

**Western Region**  
350 Sansome St, Ste 210, San Francisco, CA 94104  
415-288-1800 Fax: 415-288-1861  
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Kalaya’an Mendoza (kmendoza@aiusa.org): Colorado, Idaho, S. California, Wyoming  
Sara Schmidt (sschmidt@aiusa.org): Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Wisconsin

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION CAMPAIGN (DPAC)

AIUSA National Capitol Office, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20003  
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Brian Evans, Interim Director: bevans@aiusa.org

SPEAKER RESOURCES

For events focused on inadequate legal representation, law schools make great venues, and law professors or local criminal defense lawyers make good speakers. Here are other great speaker ideas:

**Witness to Innocence** (see p. 18-22)  
Provides support to those who have been exonerated from death row. Their website provides information on potential speakers.  

**The Journey of Hope ... from Violence to Healing**  
Led by murder victim family members, death row family members, family members of the executed, the exonerated, and others. Journey of Hope conducts public education speaking tours and addresses alternatives to the death penalty. The website includes a list of speakers and a useful guide on Hosting a Speaking Event. [www.journeyofhope.org](http://www.journeyofhope.org)

**Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights** and **Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation** (see p. 16-17)  
Provides support and speaking opportunities for murder victim family members who oppose the death penalty.  
[www.mvfr.org](http://www.mvfr.org) and [www.mvfhr.org](http://www.mvfhr.org)
HOW TO: TABLE EFFECTIVELY

Tabling is an effective way to make AI more visible in your community. Your group can publicize its current work, announce upcoming events, recruit new members, and raise funds by tabling. Tabling can also provide members of the public an opportunity to take action. Possible venues include community festivals, art shows, special events, ethnic festivals, and local coffeehouses and bookstores. School venues also include outside of dining halls, the student union, school library or any place many students pass by.

TIPS ON TABLING:

- **Appearance is important.** Attractive and well-organized materials and visuals will catch people’s eye. Videos or slide shows on a loop or images in a free-standing document holder are useful.
- **Table with at least two people.** Engage more people at the same time; have a buddy to help with questions, spot you if you need a restroom run, keep up spirits if you encounter a negative individual.
- **Be proactive, polite and friendly.** Stand behind or in front of your table, rather than sit, to be proactive and inviting. Be mindful of your body language. Don’t expect that everyone who is supportive of the issues will approach your table. Don’t assume those passing by are disinterested. When a passer-by gives you eye contact or looks at your table, greet them and have a short phrase to invite them to the table, e.g. “Hi there! How are you? Can I tell you about a human rights action we’re asking people to help us with today – it won’t take much time and it’s free!” Humor can break the ice, but avoid sarcasm. Cookies and baked goods are often a useful lure.
- **Feature 2-4 actions on your table.** You don’t want to have so many that you cannot retain information about them all and you don’t want to have so few that you miss an opportunity to promote a couple of cases. Memorize mini-talks about the actions. You must be able to describe the situation and the action in about 1 minute. You should also be able to answer basic questions about AI.
- **Know what your ask is.** Have a finite number of asks and prioritize them. For example: sign our petition on prisoner X; sign our postcard action on country Y; join our mailing list; make a contribution/buy a sticker or button. You will sense how much you can ask someone, so take it one ask at a time.
- **Troubleshooting.** Don’t spend a lot of time with people who are clearly trying to push your buttons or just enjoy arguing. Get them to do your actions and try to move them along politely so that you don’t miss other passers-by. It’s perfectly normal not to have the answers for all questions – tell them you are not sure, but they could either look at the website, or if they give you their contact information you’d be happy to get back to them (but don’t say this unless you really intend to get back to them).
- **Sign-up sheet and money jar.** Don’t miss the opportunity to get people’s contact info so that you can add them to your email list and invite them to upcoming meetings and activities. You may find new group members or valuable supports—so, always follow-up! Also, a simple money jar (if the venue permits) gives you an opportunity to raise funds for stamps and supplies and make a contribution to AIUSA to help support the organization’s work. Be prepared to tell someone what the funds will be used for. If you have someone’s attention, ask them if they’re a member of AI and encourage them to become one (brochures available from Regional Offices - p.13)

SUPPLY CHECKLIST:

(Check with your Regional Office or DPAC for supplies p.13).

- Table - reserve a table with the venue or secure your own well in advance.
- Banner - should be clearly visible from a distance.
- Information - make copies of concise handouts.
- Flyers - have info about your upcoming events.
- Sign In Sheet - get people’s contact information and follow up with them about future events.
- Action Opportunities - supply background information on opportunities for immediate action.
- Pens, clipboards, paperweights (rocks work).
- Donation Jar - raise funds for AI’s work.
**HOW TO: HOST A SPEAKER**

Perhaps one of the most powerful ways to educate and open people’s minds on the issue of the death penalty is to hear the personal stories of those who have had direct involvement with the issue. Murder victims’ family members and death row exonerees are among the most powerful. Defense attorneys, law enforcement and current or former prosecutors and judges can also be compelling. Ask your SDPAC, DPAC or Field Organizer for ideas and contacts (p.12-13).

**Planning for your event**
- Begin planning for a speaker event as early as possible; Set clear goals for the event.
- In your invitation to speakers, be clear about what you want them to discuss.
- Clarify whether each speaker expects a fee, honoraria or other expense and how and when the speaker expects to be paid.
- Develop a fundraising plan (p. 23) if you need funds to cover any event costs. Students: see what is available from your Student Activities office.
- Develop a clear agenda, with times, for the event. Don’t forget to schedule time at the beginning to introduce Amnesty International and at the end to ask people to take action and join.
- Plan time for a question and answer period after the speaker’s talk, and think of other creative ways to encourage audience participation, such as breaking into small discussion groups.
- Assign someone to act as host for the guest and ask them to give the introduction at the event. Understand the special needs of those who have been traumatized by violence or injustice.
- Communicate clearly and regularly with the speaker before the event to get information about him or her, and share information about your group and the event.
- Develop an outreach plan to attract people to the event. (p. 26-28)
- Ask all guests to sign in, and follow up with new-comers after the event.

**On the day of your event**
- If possible, arrange to meet speakers when they arrive, and take them to their hotel or other destination.
- Once they arrive, plan to spend time with them to prepare for the event.
- Allow time for the speaker to eat if food will be served at the event.

**During the event**
- Keep time. Before the event, let the speaker know how you will give time cues.
- If your speaker is attending multiple events, allow breaks in between speaking engagements.

**Following the event**
- Send a thank you note to your speaker.
- Report the success of your event to your regional office and consider posting a review and photos on Facebook.
- Send us photos too, and an evaluation (p. 36)

**Other things to consider**
- If hosting for more than one day, remember to schedule some free time and stick to it.
- Make suggestions of things the speaker can do in your community during free time.
- Remember the speaker may be away from home for a long time and need access to shopping, laundry facilities, and other basic needs.
- Try to connect the speaker to groups they may be interested in networking with.

**Questions to ask the speaker:**
- What is their complete contact information? Who to contact in an emergency?
- Do they have any special needs?
- What equipment do they need for their presentation? (e.g. slide projector, video player)
- Do they have a preference for the room set-up?
- Can you take photos of them?
- Are they available to do interviews with press?
- Can they provide a bio and photo to use for flyers or other promotional materials?
- What else do they need to feel comfortable? Be especially sensitive to the needs of trauma survivors.

**Information to share with the speaker:**
- Contact person and contact information
- What your group has been working on
- Goals for the event
- A complete agenda for the event
- Number of people expected at event
Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights (MVFHR) is an international, non-governmental organization of family members of murder victims and family members of the executed, all of whom oppose the death penalty in all cases. We view the death penalty as a profound violation of human rights.

Having all suffered a tragic loss, MVFHR members have come in different ways and times to the understanding that the death penalty does not help us heal and is not the way to pursue justice for victims.

MVFHR challenges the assumption that all families of murder victims support the death penalty and frames the death penalty as both a victims’ issue and a human rights issue. Through public education, advocacy, and organizing, we amplify the voices of victims’ families who oppose the death penalty and provide anti-death penalty campaigns with victims’ uniquely compelling testimony. As well, we draw attention to the ways in which the death penalty harms the families of those executed, and we seek to achieve recognition for these families as victims of traumatic loss.

Two of MVFHR’s special projects are the “No Silence, No Shame” project, which focuses on how the death penalty harms the families of those executed, and the “Prevention, Not Execution” project, which aims to end the death penalty for people with severe mental illness.

MVFHR speakers can address such topics as:
- Some reasons that victims’ family members oppose the death penalty
- Rethinking “closure”
- Working with victims: a guide for anti-death penalty activists
- Human Rights and Victim Justice
- Recognizing families of the executed as victims
- The death penalty and mental illness, from a victim perspective
- How to be both pro-victim and anti-death penalty

For more information, contact info@mvfhr.org or call 617-443-1102
Visit our website at www.mvfhr.org
Founded in 1976, Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) is a national organization of family members of victims of both homicide and executions who oppose the death penalty in all cases. MVFR includes people of many different perspectives. Because violent crime cuts across a broad spectrum of society, our members are geographically, racially and economically diverse.

MVFR in partnership with the states seeks to invite, strategically equip, and engage family members in state campaigns working to abolish the death penalty. Local family members work to educate about their needs and how the death penalty not only fails to meet those needs but in fact, further traumatizes families in the process.

MVFR also works to educate about trauma and how to effectively work with and support those who have experienced trauma.

Though we are not necessarily a speaker’s bureau, we meet and work with a wide range of local family members in our work across the country. MVFR members, who are speakers, are often pleased to accept invitations to engagements. If you are interested in having a speaker come to your meeting or event, please call the national office at 877-896-4702. Please be ready to answer these questions:

- Date and time of event
- Type of event
- Makeup of audience:
- Type of speaker required:
- Basics of the event
- Bios of any other Speakers:
- Honorarium ($100/day recommended)
- Travel/lodging assistance
  (Please provide for all expenses related to travel if long-distance travel is necessary).

We will check in with possibilities and get back to you with suggested speakers. If you are interested, we will let our member know that you will be calling and will give you the contact information. From there, you and the member will make arrangements.

Andre Smith
Andre lost his son to murder.
“One act of compassion can truly change the world in profound ways.”

Rev. Cathy Harrington
Cathy lost her daughter to murder.
“Life is sacred and when we participate in the murder of another human being for any reason, it diminishes our own lives.”
Wrongfully convicted, sentenced to die, and lived

Witness to Innocence is an organization of men who were convicted of crimes they did not commit. Though innocent, they were convicted, given a death sentence, and spent years on death row before being exonerated and freed. These men could have been paralyzed by bitterness, having faced the cruel injustice of wrongful conviction, but instead are speaking out for change.

The death row survivors have heart-breaking and inspiring stories to tell, and so Witness to Innocence organizes speaking events for them to educate and empower the public to take action against capital punishment. Our witnesses bring a human face to the death penalty in a way that no one else possibly could.

HOW TO HOST A WITNESS TO INNOCENCE

Death row survivors are available to give presentations anywhere in the United States. Hosting organizations are requested to cover the cost of travel, lodging and meals for their speaker as well as a $500 speaker's fee for the event. Witness to Innocence will work with you and your budget to find creative ways to fund an event. Note: many exoneree speakers do not have traditional “9 to 5” jobs in order to have greater flexibility to bring their message to many audiences; therefore, fees collected for speaking engagements directly help to support their living expenses.

See our “How to Fundraise to Put on an Event” (p. 23) for tips on funding an event. Please contact Kathy Spillman, Speakers Bureau Coordinator, to talk through your ideas for an event. She can assist you as you think through your planning steps and match you up with an appropriate speaker.

kspillman@witnesstoinnocence.org / (267)-519-4584

TIPS FOR EVENT ORGANIZERS

ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE FOR THE EVENT

• Set up a small group of people to meet regularly
• Set goals for attendance, publicity, and event format

REACH OUT TO ALLIES

• Reach out to other clubs, departments, or community groups who would share your human rights interest and/or an interest in criminal justice issues
• This will provide more help raising the necessary funds and staffing the event
• Be clear about what you’re asking for – financial support, help advertising, or volunteering to hand out surveys at the event
• Remember to give credit to all the cooperating organizations that assist with the event.

LOGISTICS
• As soon as possible, plan the details!
• Secure a room for the event
• Arrange ground transportation, lodging, and meals for the exoneree
• Make payment in a timely manner

OUTREACH AND PUBLICITY (p. 26-28)
• Don’t rely on electronic methods alone to advertise!
• Come up with printed posters, creative visual displays, sidewalk chalk, hand-bills, etc.
• Be sure to reach out via phone and face-to-face
• Talk to professors or community leaders who can promote your event for you
• Utilize news media: issue a press release/media advisory to local newspapers and TV stations (p. 28)
• Please feel free to use the downloadable outreach and publicity tools that are on our website on the “Host a WTI Event” page.

OPENING AND CLOSING THE EVENT
• Think through the event beginning to end. Will activist groups such as your state anti-death penalty coalition or your Amnesty International group be present with materials?
• Introduce the speaker as a member of Witness to Innocence, thank all of your co-sponsors, and explain your goals in hosting the event.
• Make sure you have someone to facilitate Q & A if time is allotted for this.
• Have a clear beginning and end for the event.

TAKING CARE OF THE SPEAKER
• Keep in mind that, though the speaker is being paid for this event, it is an exhausting and emotionally draining process.
• In addition to coordinating transportation, accommodations, and meals, please be attentive and sensitive to the speaker’s needs and requests.
• Be sure to check with the speaker to see if he is comfortable with any additional plans – particularly if they involve additional social interaction or revisiting their story any more.

FOLLOW-UP
• Ultimately, Witness to Innocence seeks to abolish the death penalty in the United States. Please use this event as the chance to further efforts of the anti-death penalty movement.
• Meet with your group to think about the next steps: how can your organization be strengthened? How can audience members get involved locally to further the anti-death penalty movement, either in your community or nationwide?
WITNESS TO INNOCENCE SPEAKER’S PROFILES

For more thorough biography pieces, please visit www.witnesstoinnocence.org

These men are available for speaking engagements. Check with Witness to Innocence about your group’s goals for your event – we have a large network of death row survivors capable of telling their story and supporting your efforts!

Ron Keine
New Mexico Death Row Survivor
Lives in Michigan

An elaborate false confession, hidden evidence, and a judge who refused to offer a fair trial put Ron Keine on death row for a murder he didn’t commit. Despite widely publicized newspaper interviews where the prosecution’s key witness recanted her statements, and despite a confession from the real killer, Keine and his co-defendants stayed on death row. Finally in December of 1975, a judge found out that ballistics tests definitively linked the murder weapon to the confessed killer, and Ron Keine was exonerated and set free.

Shujaa Graham
California Death Row Survivor
Lives in Maryland

Shujaa Graham grew up in the segregated South, and moved to Los Angeles as a teenager. Violence was commonplace, and Shujaa witnessed the Watts Riots and police occupation of his community. He spent time in and out of juvenile institutions, and upon turning 18 was transferred to Soledad prison. Shujaa was framed for a murder that took place inside a California prison. He endured four trials before being exonerated in 1981.

Greg Wilhoit
Oklahoma Death Row Survivor
Lives in Northern California

False expert testimony and a defense lawyer who appeared in court drunk and presented no defense got Greg Wilhoit wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife. He lost not only 8 years of his life behind bars for this crime, but his family. Greg’s two daughters were ages one and four when he was arrested. Ultimately, thanks to tireless work by an assigned attorney, Greg was issued a directed verdict of innocence, and in 1993 he was freed.

Gary Drinkard
Alabama Death Row Survivor
Lives in Alabama

Though a recent back injury made it physically impossible for Gary to have committed the crime for which he was accused, his half-sister gave false testimony against him and he was sentenced to death. In 2000, the state Supreme Court reversed the sentence and demanded a new trial based on prosecutorial misconduct. With the help of the Southern Center for Human Rights, Gary won an acquittal in 2001.

www.witnesstoinnocence.org  (267) 519-4584
info@witnesstoinnocence.org  1501 Cherry St. Philadelphia, PA 19102
Delbert Tibbs  
Florida Death Row Survivor  
Lives in Illinois

A former Master’s student at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Delbert Tibbs was on a self-described spiritual journey, walking across the country, when he was arrested for a rape and murder he did not commit. The witness changed her description of the killer after seeing Polaroid pictures of Delbert, and came close to acknowledging that the actual killer was her ex-boyfriend in court before the judge called a recess. An all-white jury returned a guilty verdict and death sentence in less than two days. Through tremendous outside support, Delbert accessed better legal representation and was exonerated in 1977. He is a published poet and is writing a book version of his life story.

Juan Melendez  
Florida Death Row Survivor  
Lives in New Mexico

Juan Melendez spent 17 years, 8 months, and one day on Florida’s death row for a crime he did not commit. No physical evidence ever linked him to the crime, and the real killer made as many as 16 confessions to the crime. One of the original witnesses to testify against Juan recanted his statement 12 years later, saying he was coerced. When definitive evidence pointed to the real killer, Juan was exonerated in 2002: the 99th person exonerated from death row in the U.S. since 1976. Juan is incredibly active in the anti-death penalty movement today.

Randy Steidl  
Illinois Death Row Exoneree  
Lives in Indiana

Randy was put on death row for the murders of two people he did not know. Witnesses gave false testimony, he had poor legal representation, and – despite a lack of DNA evidence to incriminate him – he ended up being sentenced to death. After over 17 years in jail, it was revealed that Randy had been framed. The man responsible for the murder had ties to the governor, and so was never tried or convicted. Through the Center for Wrongful Convictions, a federal judge was convinced to demand a new trial for Randy in light of more recent findings. In 2004 Randy was finally released from prison. He played a powerful role in New Mexico’s abolition of the death penalty in 2009 by testifying in front of the state senate.
Freddie Lee Pitts
Florida Death Row Survivor
Lives in Florida

Freddie Lee Pitts was convicted based on a confession extracted through beatings and testimony of a false eyewitness, and sentenced to death. A few weeks after being sent to death row, a white man admitted to the murder that Freddie was sentenced for. The local sheriff ignored this confession. Later, the eyewitness recanted her testimony, the polygraph operated who'd extracted the confessions was attacked for unethical practices, and eventually Freddie received a full pardon from the governor, who was convinced of his innocence.

Curtis McCarty
Oklahoma Death Row Survivor
Lives in Oklahoma

Curtis McCarty spent 21 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. He was convicted based on false expert testimony; a forensic analyst who originally found that hairs at the crime scene did NOT match Curtis’s changed her notes over the course of three years to say they may have been his. It was not until this expert underwent investigation for fraud that her false testimony in Curtis’s case was revealed. After 19 years on death row and 21 years in prison, Curtis was released in 2007.

Harold Wilson
Pennsylvania Death Row Survivor
Lives in Virginia

Harold Wilson was given three death sentences, and spent over 16 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. An Assistant District Attorney, Jack McMahon, who later became notorious for his training video advising prosecutors to use race in selecting death penalty juries, convicted Harold. After many years of waiting, the state Supreme Court granted him a new trial because of the discriminatory practices used in his jury selection. Blood found at the crime scene was demonstrated to not be Harold’s, and he was finally acquitted of all charges.
HOW TO: FUNDRAISE FOR SPEAKERS AND EVENTS

Human rights work costs money. Whether you are raising funds to support your group’s activities at the local level or to make a contribution to support AIUSA, fundraising is an essential component of your death penalty abolition work. If you want to organize a speaking engagement, you will need to raise funds for an honorarium and travel expenses, if the speaker is not based in your town. Raising cash need not be burdensome or onerous. In fact, it can be fun!

Fundraising Ideas and Suggestions

1. In-kind Donations
   Look at each expense and think about ways you can get those needs met for free or at a discount. Examples of in-kind donations include food from a restaurant or grocery store, printing from a print shop, and a free hotel room from a hotel.

2. Selling Merchandise
   Selling T-shirts, pins, and posters requires initial funds to purchase the products. Start with low-priced items. For such small items, request donations and then give items away. For example, you might be able to buy buttons for 50 cents, but if you request a donation for that same pin, many people are likely to put a dollar or a larger amount into your collection jar.

3. Raffles
   Raffles are a fun and simple way to earn money. Ask local businesses to donate prizes and sell tickets for a certain period of time. Incorporate the raffle into the group’s work by having the drawing during a meeting or special event.

4. Student Activities or Academic Department Funds
   Student groups should be able to request funds from their school’s student activities fund or from teachers who manage departmental funds for educational events. Most universities require students pay a student activities fee. Find out how from your office of student affairs or student government association what the process is to make a request well in advance.

GENERAL TIPS

- **Know Where You Are Going:** Identify specifically what it is you want to accomplish, and get started EARLY! Set clear, realistic financial goals and stick to them. You should be clear within your group and with your targeted givers about what funds will be used for. Most donors want to know what their money will be used for.
- **Draw on Your Resources:** And that means you, your fellow group members, your Area Coordinator, Student Area Coordinator, or SDPAC, and your friends and allies. Contact your Regional Office (1-866-A-REGION) and other AI groups for ideas.
- **Know Your Territory:** Good salespeople know their market.
- **Have a plan:** You cannot expect to get the funds you need without a plan that spells out how you will get them with a clear task list, assignments for individuals in your group, and a timeline. The better organized you are, the more impressed donors will be.
- **Keep It Positive:** If you think you can’t do it, you won’t. You are selling something worthwhile!
- **Appreciation:** Always thank your donors!
HOW TO: RUN A GOOD DISCUSSION

- Ensure there is a clear facilitator who does not interject view points, but only plays the role of keeping the conversation on track and involving as many people as possible.
- Make the purpose of the discussion clear at the beginning.
- It may help to offer a few simple guidelines to keep the discussion respectful.
- Use respectful, calm tones at all times, and insist that participants remain respectful too.
- It is useful to have a presentation of information (e.g. speakers or film) to provide a solid context for a fruitful discussion. (Contact DPAC@aiusa.org for our PowerPoint presentation)
- Before launching the discussion, entertain questions about the information presented.
- Prepare for common questions from various perspectives. Make sure you’ve read the information your are presenting, and have some notes or supporting materials on hand.
- Stay on track. Make sure you can see a clock or a watch, or designate a timekeeper.
- Plan a schedule with time allotted to each section of the discussion. Having an agenda – and sticking to it – can help to keep things moving. Avoid programs that are longer than about 1.5 hours as participants may have busy schedules and may not be as enthusiastic about the subject as you. If there is a small group that wants to keep the discussion going, you may want to allow them to continue, but formally close the program so that others can leave.
- Ask questions. Sometimes it can be helpful to summarize and repeat participants’ responses to check for understanding.
- Encourage participants to ask questions, and express their opinions and observations.
- Don’t rush to fill every lull or pause – sometimes people legitimately need a moment to think. Break a silence by mentioning ideas or responses you have heard about in the past, and then ask individuals to share their observations and perspectives.
- Involving diverse perspectives may help you appeal to a wider audience and have a deeper discussion. However, be sure to keep the overall topic on track.

Troubleshooting - How to handle difficult people:
- If someone is being rude or is taking the program off track, try the “ABC” method. Acknowledge the point (“that’s an interesting point”), create a Bridge (“but that’s a little different from the focus of tonight’s discussion”), Change the subject back (“What do you think about ... ?” or “Does someone have any thoughts about ... ?”).
- If someone is being a jerk (note: discern whether they have a strong opinion or whether they are truly being disrespectful to the group or an individual), politely call them out. For example, you could say, “I’m sorry you feel that way, but this is meant to be a discussion for everyone and it would be helpful if you would frame your ideas in a more respectful/less personalized way.”
- If someone is dominating the discussion, encourage them to step back while affirming their participation. For example, “that’s another great point, let’s see if someone who hasn’t spoken yet has anything to add.”
Scott Langley is a professional photographer and one of Amnesty International's State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (SDPAC). He has documented some of his many experiences at various death rows, vigils and protests on behalf of prisoners.

He has generously allowed AI groups to show his compelling and informative photographs. Note: Scott is also open to speaking invitations alongside a display of his photos.

You have permission to download and display the photos (electronically or in print) for educational use, as long as you notify the photographer in advance (send an email with your name, city, state, and organization/school name to info@deathpenaltyphoto.org).

Display Options:

1. **Print photos to hang or display during your action.**
   High quality photos are available at [www.deathpenaltyphoto.org/dpaw](http://www.deathpenaltyphoto.org/dpaw) and can be printed for physical display. Display can be done in more formal ways such as using frames or easels. Or it can work in less formal ways, such as mounting them to foam core panels or neatly taping them to walls or propping them up on tables.

   Please use the descriptive captions with the photos as most need to be given context to be understood. Please use a quality color printer and photo quality paper.

2. **Incorporate photos into a slideshow that can be presented digitally**
   Create your own PowerPoint presentation from the photos, or you can download the Troy Davis stay of execution presentation. This is a large file of 128 megabytes, so it will take some time to download. If you would like to preview the PowerPoint file as a PDF before committing to the large download, you can access a 1.5 megabyte preview.

If you have any questions or have technical difficulties, please contact Scott Langley at info@deathpenaltyphoto.org or (518) 392-2810.

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*Scott Langley at anti-death penalty demo*
HOW TO: PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

1) Get clear on the details
2) Develop the tools
3) Cast the net
4) Personalize outreach
5) Follow-up

1) Get clear on the details
It’s all about the 5 W’s!
Everyone in your group should be able to rattle off the 5Ws and all your materials should clearly have this info:
- Who (who’s the event for (open to the public? RSVP?), who’s organizing it, who to ask for more info?)
- What (what type of event is it)
- When (give date and day of the week as well as time)
- Where (provide a link to a map or directions and information on transportation and parking)
- Why (what’s the purpose of the event)

2) Develop the tools
a) Basic email and flyer
Write a basic text email (avoid graphics for folks whose email will scramble it up). Organize the information so that it is concise and the important info is featured at the top. Make a nicely laid-out version that you can send around as a PDF and print out. (See sample on next page). You have permission to use AI’s logo for AI purposes.

b) Handbill
You may want to also make a smaller version of the flyer (4 to a page or 2 to a page) – uses less paper, cheaper to reproduce, easy to hand out or leave piles of in places.

c) Online invitations or advertisements (e.g. Facebook events)

d) Media Advisory (More info on page 28)

3) Cast the net
Brainstorm with your group about organizations, places and individuals you should get the materials and information to.
What groups might have an interest in your topic? What are the ways folks get information in your community? (e.g. ad in the local weekly happenings newspapers, bulletin boards, announcements in classes, online methods, etc.).

Get other groups to cosponsor, and they can reach out to their networks.

Plaster the flyers around, use the handbills to hand out to folks at your tabling events or at well-trafficked pedestrian areas and other types of events.

Send the media advisory out to your local media. If you’re at a school, be sure to take advantage of your school newspaper and other outlets. Ask your Field Organizer (p. 13) for help with this.

Give everyone in your group a stack of materials to distribute and ask folks to commit to getting them out and have folks let you know where they will put the flyers to avoid redundancy and gain firmer commitments.

4) Do personalized outreach
The best way to get folks to come is to make as many personalized appeals as possible. Don’t rely on email, ask people in person where possible or call them up. Ask your friends and classmates to come – with enthusiasm. Remind them.

5) Follow-up
Ask folks who put up flyers to check on them as flyers often get pulled down and sometimes damaged or defaced.
Make follow-up calls to press to ensure they received your media advisory.

Remind folks you invited. People usually need to hear/read about the event at least three times before they commit to attending.
INNOCENT ON DEATH ROW

Ray Krone, the 100th Exoneree, tells his story

WHAT’S GOING ON WITH THE U.S. DEATH PENALTY SYSTEM?

Date: Oct. 28 (Thurs.)
Time: 7pm
Location: GSU Sparks Hall, Rm 412

For More Info: Laura Smith, dummyemail@yahoo.com, 404 123 4567
EVENTS AS MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Most events can be media opportunities. Amnesty International groups can contact the media about vigils, demonstrations, holiday card actions, guest speakers, protests, art shows, and many other activities.

Getting the media to cover your event:
- Notify the media at least 48 hours before your event if possible.
- Write a media advisory (see below) and fax it to the local Associated Press and any other local media you can.
- Call or email the Associated Press and ask if they can list your event in the “daybook,” a calendar that local media read to learn of upcoming events.
- Time your event to make it convenient for newspaper coverage. As many weekly newspapers go to print on a Monday or Tuesday, time between a weekend event and going to press is short.
- Take photographs at your event and submit them electronically within 48 hours to your weekly paper. Make sure to label each photograph in the e-mail when you submit it. Strong visual events could also interest local television – new and creative ideas are always worth trying.
- Use Amnesty International banners or posters with “Amnesty International” clearly written on them at your event. Bystanders can identify you and if a picture is published it will indicate the host of the event.
- Invite celebrities, such as local politicians, actors, sports figures, musicians, and others in the public eye, to increase interest in an event. Brief the celebrity on the reason for your event and why it should be important to them. (Please note that if you are considering approaching a regional or national figure, you should always talk with staff at your Regional Office. They may be able to help you approach people and it is a crucial step in avoiding multiple people from Amnesty making requests to one particular person.)
- Consider inviting an expert speaker from a local university.

WRITING MEDIA ADVISORIES
- A media advisory should simply announce an event, along with relevant details (who-what-when-where-why). It should be as short and to the point as possible. It should also contain a key message along with a quote stating AI’s position on a relevant issue. Keep the message clear and concise, and use your follow up call as an opportunity to provide additional information.
- Send the media advisory to all relevant local media by fax or e-mail ideally one week before the event, but at least two or three days in advance.
- Identify the person you want to send it to beforehand. Address faxes and letters to them directly, and ask to speak to them when you follow up with phone calls. Get e-mail addresses whenever possible, so you can minimize the risk of individuals not receiving your advisory via fax.
- Follow up with a phone call and e-mail one to two days before the event, and perhaps again the day of the event as a reminder. Keep your conversation brief and courteous at all times. When following up with journalists, ask if they have a moment to speak since they are often on deadline; if this is the case, inquire when you should call back. The best time to place these calls is usually during the morning hours.
- Be prepared to resend the advisory to those who say they have not received it.
APPROACHING THE DEATH PENALTY:
THINGS TO CONSIDER

Open Attitude
AI has a very clear position that the death penalty is wrong in all circumstances because it is a human rights violation. We understand that not everyone shares this view, despite the growing international consensus in favor of abolition. The death penalty can be a very charged issue that can push people’s emotional buttons. This may make it difficult to start a conversation on the topic or engage in a respectful one. It is important to consider other points of view; after all, it is our hope that those not persuaded to our position will at least consider it. In your efforts to engage people in conversation, listen and find out what is important to them and try to engage them where they are. There’s nothing wrong with a spirited discussion, but use the opportunity to inject information and avoid getting your buttons pushed.

Look for Common Ground
There is a lot of room for agreement. It should be easy to find agreement on fundamental principles of fairness. For example, almost everyone can agree that people who commit horrible crimes should be held accountable for their actions and victims and their loved ones should be given support. Also, issues of fair application of the system and the protection of the innocent are areas for common ground.

Be Sensitive to Victims’ Needs
It is important not to speak for victims’ loved ones, especially if you are not one. Victims’ families are a diverse group of people with diverse views on the death penalty. It is best to acknowledge this and make it known that there are plenty of families who don’t feel the death penalty is appropriate, even though those who call for it are often more visible. Additionally, avoid getting backed into a corner that being against the death penalty automatically means you care less about victims and their families.

Be Careful with Religious Arguments
Many proponents of the death penalty have religious reasons for their position. Ironically, most of the world’s religions have plenty of teachings that can be used to provide a strong argument against the death penalty. Be careful when challenging someone’s belief in the death penalty to not also challenge their religious faith. It’s OK to interject other religious viewpoints, but often, addressing the facts about the application of the death penalty may be more useful.

It’s OK not to have all the answers!
You don’t need to have all the answers to engage in a discussion. The more conversations you have, the more you can learn about the issues and what types of points make an impact. If you don’t know something, feel free to ask for an opportunity to look into it and follow up. Making up information will lose you more credibility than saying “I’m not sure. That’s a great question. Let me find out and get back to you.”
PREP DISCUSSION FOR AI GROUPS

Before taking on a death penalty event, please discuss with your AI group the overall subject so they can understand AI’s position and be prepared for interactions with others as representatives of AI.

Have someone in the group who is a good facilitator lead the discussion. Use the questions below and leave time for people to answer. Use the answers below to fill in any gaps. The facilitator should do some background reading to help educate the group. We also recommend using the quiz (p. 32) as a way to gauge the knowledge of your group and help them learn some of the basic facts.

What if individuals in the group support the death penalty?
Not everyone who joins AI is likely to support all of AI’s positions. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions and should not be made to feel bad for having a different perspective. We ask that all AI members keep an open mind on various perspectives, understand AI’s position and be prepared to articulate it, even if it is not their own.

THE DEATH PENALTY AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

In what cases does AI oppose the death penalty?
AI opposes the death penalty in all cases as a fundamental violation of human rights.

What articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are violated by the death penalty?
The right to life (Article 3), freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment (Article 5), and all the articles on equality before the law and due process.

Can you explain why the death penalty would be considered cruel, inhuman, and degrading even for someone who committed an especially brutal murder?
How society treats someone should be based on its highest values rather than mimicking the brutality of the worst offender. The death penalty is cruel and inhuman on its own; we don’t compare it to the crime committed. Note: the US Constitution says “cruel and unusual”, but the UDHR says “cruel, inhuman and degrading”.

Can you explain why human rights standards would prohibit the government’s right to take life?
Human rights, in part, are about limiting government power over its citizens to ensure that human dignity is protected. Taking life diminishes its value, no matter whose life is at stake. Also, because governments cannot give or return life once taken, it is too great a power to give to these human institutions, which are subject to mistakes and bias. Furthermore, governments can keep people safe from violent offenders without the death penalty.

Can you explain how the right to life is not taken by AI to include opposition to abortion?
Because the issue of abortion is controversial, like the death penalty, it would be better to stick to the death penalty. If someone wants to challenge AI for not being anti-abortion, it would be better to respectfully ask to keep the topics separate as you may miss the opportunity to discuss the death penalty. Officially, AI is against the criminalization of abortion and does not view abortion as a violation of the right to life. AI frames the issue more around the rights of women. (AI has opposed forced abortions and sterilizations).

Does AI care less about victims of murder than people who commit murder?
Opposing the death penalty does not mean opposing justice for those who have suffered a horrible loss. AI does not believe in violating human rights to address human rights violations. A murder is the violation of the right to life and so is the death penalty. AI has fought for accountability and justice for victims for decades - we do not want there to be more victims.
The death penalty and international human rights standards. Over two-thirds of the countries in the world – 140 – have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In 2010, most known executions took place in five countries - China, Iran, North Korea, Yemen and the USA.

The death penalty is racially biased. Since 1977, the overwhelming majority of death row defendants (77%) have been executed for killing white victims, even though African-Americans make up about half of all homicide victims.

The death penalty claims innocent lives. Since 1973, 141 people have been released from death rows throughout the country due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. In this same time period, more than 1,200 people have been executed.

The death penalty is not a deterrent. FBI data shows that all 14 states without capital punishment in 2008 had homicide rates at or below the national rate.

The death penalty costs more and diverts resources from genuine crime control. The greatest costs associated with the death penalty occur prior to and during trial, not in post-conviction proceedings. Even if all post-conviction proceedings (appeals) were abolished, the death penalty would still be more expensive than alternative sentences.

The death penalty disregards mental illness. The execution of those with mental illness or “the insane” is clearly prohibited by international law. In the USA, Constitutional protections for those with other forms of mental illness are minimal, however, and dozens of prisoners have been executed despite suffering from serious mental illness.

The death penalty is arbitrary and unfair. Almost all death row inmates could not afford their own attorney at trial. Local politics, the location of the crime, plea bargaining, and pure chance affect the process and make it a lottery of who lives and dies. Since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, 82% of all executions have taken place in the South (37% in Texas alone).

The death penalty and the rights of foreign nationals. 31 foreign nationals have been executed in the United States since 1988. Virtually none had been informed, upon arrest, of their right to communicate with their consular representatives.

The death penalty can never be “voluntary.” A decision taken by someone on death row to end his or her life through execution can never be consensual. Moreover, it cannot disguise the fact that the state is involved in a premeditated killing. There have been 139 “volunteer” executions since 1977.

The federal death penalty is arbitrary and overreaching. The federal death penalty can be enacted in any state or territory of the United States, even in states that do not have the death penalty. Currently, there are 60 people on federal death row.

More information on each of these issues is available at www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/
QUIZ: THE DEATH PENALTY IN PRACTICE

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. The death penalty deters murder.
2. “Life without Parole” (permanent imprisonment) is a more expensive sentence than the death penalty.
3. Defendants in capital cases have the right to an attorney who is fully qualified to try death penalty cases and has the resources needed to put on a vigorous defense.
4. People of color are murdered more frequently than whites, proportionate to their numbers in the general population.
5. Those who murder people of color represent about 80% of those who have been executed.
6. Most people on death row could afford a lawyer.
7. 29 people have been wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death since the 1970s in the US.
8. DNA is the main reason for death row exonerations.
9. Belarus is the only European country with the death penalty.
10. In 2011, most executions in the world happened in these five countries: China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the U.S.A.
DEATH PENALTY QUIZ ANSWERS

1) False. There are numerous studies about deterrence. A few claim the death penalty deters murder, but 88% of former and current heads of the US's top academic criminologist associations reject the idea that the death penalty deters crime. When looking at states with and without the death penalty, the non-death penalty states have lower murder rates.

2) False. A death sentence is far more costly than life without parole. The legal expenses are much higher in capital cases and most of those costs are accrued at the front end, during the trial, not during the appeals process. States spend millions more dollars on the death penalty than they would if all death row prisoners had life sentences.

3) False. True in theory, but in practice capital defendants are often represented by untrained and under-resourced lawyers.

4) True. About half of murder victims are African-American.

5) False. It’s the opposite – 77% of those executed were convicted of killing white victims. The race of the victim is the strongest indicator of racial bias, as opposed to only looking at the race of perpetrators. People of color who murder whites are far more likely to be sentenced to death than whites who murder people of color.

6) False. An overwhelming majority of death row inmates could not afford a lawyer and had court-appointed lawyers. Even with public defenders who care about their clients, they are often overloaded with cases and under-resourced. There have also been horror stories of “the sleeping lawyer” or “drunk lawyer.” In Georgia 5 men on death row had their own attorneys call them a racial slur in court.

7) False. As of Nov. 2012, 140 people have been exonerated and released from death row. There are estimates of at least a dozen who have been wrongly executed in recent decades (see the report “Reasonable Doubts” by Equal Justice USA -www.ejusa.org).

8) False. It is true that DNA is a powerful tool for identifying wrongful convictions, especially in rape cases. However, the majority of death penalty cases do not have biological material that can be DNA-tested. Most of the exonerations from death row were not based on DNA. Prosecutorial and police misconduct and mistaken eyewitness identifications have played large roles in wrongful convictions. We cannot assume that DNA will be the main way to prevent wrongful convictions in capital cases.

9) True. Only Belarus has the death penalty in Europe and the European Union has banned it. South Africa repealed capital punishment when it abandoned Apartheid. South Africans studied the US death penalty and concluded it was not good for a country trying to move toward racial equality. Much of Africa, and most of Latin America do not practice capital punishment. Two-thirds of the world’s nations no longer use the death penalty.

10) True.

Great sources for more information: www.amnestyusa.org/abolish, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org
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<td>E-MAIL (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)</td>
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TAKE ACTION!

STATE FOCUS
AI USA has prioritized our work against the death penalty on the U.S. because of the enormous significance abolition here would mean for global abolition and because U.S. activists have a stronger impact on U.S. authorities than do our international allies. In the U.S., capital punishment is primarily a state-by-state issue, rather than a federal issue (though the federal government and military have the death penalty). If you live in a death penalty state, we encourage you to contact your SDPAC (see p. 12) to find out what your state abolition community’s strategy is and how you can promote actions that can help further those goals. If you’re in a non-death penalty state, we encourage you to look at the national actions below.

FOCAL CASE
Please help us promote urgent actions on behalf of featured U.S. death row prisoners. The cases AI selects often symbolize problems with the overall death penalty system. Help us to gather signatures on petitions for these individuals and use the opportunity to talk with people about the death penalty overall and why it must go!

**Reggie Clemons** was sentenced to death in St. Louis, Missouri as an accomplice in the 1991 murder of two young white women, Julie and Robin Kerry, who plunged from the Chain of Rocks Bridge into the Mississippi River. Two other black youths were also convicted, including Marlin Gray (executed in 2005). Clemons has consistently maintained his innocence. His case illustrates many of the flaws in the U.S. death penalty system, including police brutality, prosecutor misconduct, and racial bias in jury selection. Petitions are needed and available at: [www.showmejustice.org](http://www.showmejustice.org)

URGENT ACTION APPEALS
Visit our death penalty abolition page to download the latest actions on behalf of individual’s facing execution: [http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish](http://www.amnestyusa.org/abolish)
TELL US HOW IT WENT!

FEEDBACK FORM

Name:

Group Name:

Activities your group did:

What sort of response did you receive from your community?

How many people signed action petitions and on which cases?

For activities that went well, why did you think they went well?

For activities that didn’t go well, why did you think they didn’t?

What would you do differently next time?

Did you find the resource kit useful?
If so, what in particular was helpful? If not, why?

How can we improve the resource kit?

THANKS SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GIVE US FEEDBACK!
Please send your responses to DPAC
AIUSA, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20003 / Fax: 202-546-7142 / bevans@aiusa.org