



ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

Urge Governor Newsom to Commute All Death Sentences in California

California is at a historic crossroads.

Governor Gavin Newsom has said, “My ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in California.” Now, with his term ending in January 2027, the window to turn that commitment into action is closing. California has not carried out an execution in nearly two decades, yet more than 550 people remain under sentence of death in the state. **That is more than one quarter of all people under sentence of death in the United States.** Governor Newsom has the power to act. He can directly grant clemency for many people under sentence of death and ask the California Supreme Court to recommend commutations for the others.

This toolkit is our roadmap to turn public pressure into action and make sure Governor Newsom hears one clear demand: commute every death sentence before it is too late.

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION:

Choose any level of engagement that works for you!

LOW LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

The fastest and easiest way to take action!

1. Take AIUSA’s online action: <https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/190987/action/1>
2. Share the action with your networks by email, text, group chat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, or X.
3. Ask at least five people to take the action.

Social Media Action

- Hashtag
 - #CommuteTheRow
 - #deathpenalty
 - #CommuteAllDeathSentences
 - #EndTheDeathPenalty
- Social Media handles

- [@CAgovernor](#)
- [@GavinNewsom](#)
- Sample Messaging
 - California has more than 550 people under sentence of death, more than one quarter of the national total. [@CAgovernor](#) has said his ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in California. Now is the time to act #CommuteTheRow. Join me and take action: <https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/190987/action/1>
 - [.@GavinNewsom](#) you have said your ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in [#California](#). Now is the time to turn that goal into action. With more than 550 people still under sentence of death in California, I urge you to do everything in your power to commute all death sentences NOW
 - The death penalty in California is costly, flawed, and irreversible. [@amnestyusa](#) breaks down 10 facts every activist should know about the system, the people impacted by it, and the urgent need for [#California](#) to choose a different path.
 - Read and share: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/blog/10-facts-about-the-death-penalty-in-california/>

MEDIUM LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

Post, Educate and Move People to Action!

- **Post on social media** by clicking [here](#): Share campaign messaging, tag Governor Newsom, and invite others to take action.
- **Make a call** by clicking [here](#): Use the call script to urge Governor Newsom's office to commute all death sentences in California.
- **[Sign up for a Power Hour](#)** Join the conversation on Death Penalty work in California. We are building a team to apply pressure on Gov. Newsome to commute the death penalty sentences before he leaves office. We will be hosting various opportunities to lift your voice in the coming months.
- **[Share the "10 Facts" resource](#)** with your networks: Help others understand why this campaign matters and why California must move toward ending the death penalty.
- **Invite three people to take action with you:** Send the [action link](#) to friends, family, classmates, colleagues, or members of your community and ask them to join you.

HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

Organize your community: Help move people from awareness to action.

You can:

1. Host a postcard writing event.
2. Organize a phone banking or call in moment.

3. Lead a community action hour.
4. Ask your local group to make this campaign a meeting agenda item.
5. Invite members to take the online action together.
6. Share the campaign with allied groups focused on racial justice, criminal legal reform, faith based advocacy, student activism, or human rights.
7. Recruit volunteers to post, call, and send postcards on the same day to create a visible wave of pressure.

Postcard Action: Invite activists to purchase or use a postcard that represents their state, city, campus, or community. This helps show Governor Newsom that people across the country are watching and urging action.

- **Step by Step Guide**

- Buy or use a postcard from your state, city, campus, or community.
- Write a short message on the front and a full message on the back. Refer to table below for sample messaging
- Add the AIUSA action link or QR code.
- Address the postcard to Governor Gavin Newsom.
- Mail it to
 - Governor Gavin Newsom
 - 1021 O Street, Suite 9000
 - Sacramento, CA 95814
- Take a photo of your postcard before mailing it and share it with your group to inspire others and post it on social media tagging us [@amnestyusa](https://twitter.com/amnestyusa) with the hashtag #CommuteTheRow

Front Message	Governor Newsom, history is watching. Commute all death sentences.
Back Message	Governor Newsom, turn your goal into action! You have said that your ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in California. With your term ending in January 2027, the window to act is closing.

	California still has more than 550 people under sentence of death. I urge you to do everything in your power to commute all death sentences before leaving office. Sincerely, [Name] [City] [State]
Link turn it QR code	https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/190987/action/1

Phone Call Action: Phone calls are a simple but powerful way to keep pressure on Governor Newsom’s office. Activists are encouraged to call more than once, and when possible, to make calling part of a shared community action. You can call individually every day, a few times a week, or on key campaign days. You can also bring your local group, student group, faith community, or friends together for a phone banking gathering where everyone makes calls at the same time, supports each other, and then stays afterward to connect, debrief, and share food.

- **Call this number:** (916) 445-2841
- **Call Options**
 1. English press 1, Spanish (press 2)
 2. Office hours, fax, email Newsom (press 1)
 3. Transfer to Representative
 - Speak to representative (press 6)
 - If your call does not require assistance, you can leave a message. Please note, a representative will review the message, but we don't have a way to return the call or open a request (press 3)
- **Phone script:**

Hello, my name is [Name], and I am calling from [City, State] and a member of Amnesty International USA.

I am urging Governor Newsom to do everything in his power to commute all death sentences in California before leaving office in January 2027.

Governor Newsom has said that his ultimate goal is to end the death penalty in California. He has also taken important steps toward that goal, including establishing a moratorium on executions. Now, he has the opportunity to commute all death sentences in California before leaving office.

Please share this message with the Governor: turn your goal into action. Commute all death sentences.

Thank you.

Power Hour Action: Back to School and Community Organizing Power Hour

A Power Hour is a simple, low barrier organizing space where activists come together to learn, take action, and invite others to join. This can be hosted by a local group, student group, faith community, classroom, campus club, coalition space, or community organization.

- Power Hour Goal: In one hour, participants will:
 - Learn why this campaign matters.
 - Take AIUSA's online action.
 - Share the action with their networks.
 - Write postcards or make calls.
 - Recruit others to take action.
- Need support? Sign up [HERE](#) and AIUSA rep will contact you!

RESOURCES

For raising awareness

- 10 Facts About the Death Penalty in California
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/blog/10-facts-about-the-death-penalty-in-california/>
- [Report](#): Amnesty International Global Report: Death Sentences and Executions 2025

For action taking

- AIUSA Online Action
<https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/190987/action/1>

For sharing the campaign webpage

- Urge Governor Newsom to Commute All Death Sentences in California
<https://www.amnestyusa.org/campaigns/urge-governor-newsom-to-commute-all-death-sentences-in-california/>

AIUSA members and activists,

Every action matters. A signature, a post, a postcard, a phone call, or a one hour gathering can help build the public pressure needed in this urgent moment. Governor Newsom has already named the goal. Now he must act on it.

Together, AIUSA members and activists can help make sure he hears the message clearly:
Commute all death sentences in California before leaving office.

Thank you for taking action!