

Peacemaking Voices Concern about Iowa State Senate Study Bill (SSB) 1004

submitted by Rev. Lisa Ross Thedens

Peacemaking Task Force is very concerned about Iowa State Senate Study Bill (SSB) 1004 to reinstate the death penalty in Iowa. For the past 60 years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been advocating for an end to the death penalty. We believe that the death penalty challenges the redemptive power of the cross. [God's grace is sufficient](#) for all humans regardless of their sin. As Christians, we must "seek the redemption of evildoers and not their death."

SSB 1004 has already passed from subcommittee to full committee. Though with much hard work from those opposed, the death penalty bill did not make it through our legislature last session, the make up of the legislature is different this year, and there is a very real danger it could pass this year.

Here is a link to the latest statement (Aug. 2019) from PC(USA)'s Office of Public Witness on the death penalty

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/opw/2019/08/05/statement-on-the-federal-death-penalty/>

(excerpt below)

- The 171st General Assembly, in 1959, asserted, "capital punishment cannot be condoned by an interpretation of the Bible based upon the revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ," and noted that "the use of the death penalty tends to brutalize the society that condones it."
- The 189th General Assembly, in 1977, called upon Presbyterians to work to prevent the execution of persons now under sentence of death and speak out against attempts to reinstate the death penalty in state and federal law.
- The 190th General Assembly, in 1978, stated strongly that "Capital punishment is an expression of vengeance which contradicts the justice of God on the cross."

In 1985, 2010, and 2018, the General Assembly again reaffirmed our opposition and called for an immediate moratorium on all executions. It has been proven to be racially biased. In fact, over the past 30 years research has shown that [race is a significant factor in death penalty cases](#). Additionally, capital punishment [does not contribute to lower homicide rates](#). **We urge Presbyterians to act now and continue to raise strong objections to capital punishment.** *(from Office of Public Witness)*

This briefing from Iowans Against the Death Penalty will help you work with us against reinstatement of the death penalty in our state:

<https://peia.org/wp-content/uploads/IADP-Newsletter-Vol-1-2.pdf>

For those who will not be in the Presbytery Zoom meeting next Saturday, we strongly recommend the following webinar on the death penalty and race with excellent speakers:

<https://peia.org/wp-content/uploads/webinar-death-penalty.pdf>

In Christ's peace,
The Peacemaking Task Force