

RESOLUTION NUMBER 129

WHEREAS, the federal courts recently banned all executions in Missouri citing that the present practice causes “unconstitutional pain and suffering”; and

WHEREAS, the present execution system in Missouri includes the use of an anesthesiologist who was found to be dyslexic, has been banned from practicing medicine in two hospitals and who has been sued more than 20 times for malpractice; and

WHEREAS, over the past years the death penalty system in the State of Missouri has had numerous complaints of being capricious and arbitrary resulting in innocent people being wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death in Missouri; and

WHEREAS, according to data in a study of death sentencing in Missouri by Michael Lenza, a University of Missouri sociologist, entitled The Prevailing Injustice in the Application of the Death Penalty in Missouri (1978-1996) gross disparities are clearly indicated in the sentencing of minorities with the death penalty compared to other groups throughout Missouri in a variety of instances; and

WHEREAS, African-Americans represent almost half (almost 48%) of those facing execution in Missouri but comprise only 11.7% of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, according to several reports a large majority of those persons facing capital charges are indigent can not afford their own attorney; and

WHEREAS, the State of Missouri now ranks 4th in the nation in the number of citizens executed, with only Texas, Virginia and Oklahoma having executed more people since the death penalty was reinstated; and

WHEREAS, many Missourians are calling for an end to state executions and national polls have consistently shown a majority support for a moratorium with over 2600 groups nationwide calling for a moratorium on executions, including over 80 Missouri organizations and faith communities; and

WHEREAS, there have been numerous highly publicized cases both nationally and in Missouri where individuals serving on death row for years have later been found innocent which further calls into question the fairness of this practice, and

WHEREAS, around the country there have been growing numbers of groups, organizations and individuals that have proclaimed the innocence of individuals on death row with compelling arguments including movements in support of the innocence of Larry Griffin, Marlin Gray and Reggie Clemons, and

WHEREAS, the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis has embarked upon an investigation into the possible wrongful execution of Larry Griffin, which is an unprecedented act in this country by a prosecutor; and

WHEREAS, during the 2005-06 legislative session HB 1496 was introduced before the Missouri General Assembly calling for a moratorium on all executions and establishing a Commission on the Death Penalty to study the use of the death penalty in Missouri; and

WHEREAS, in the opinion of many, fairness and justice compel that the provisions of HB 1496 be at least reconsidered by the Missouri General Assembly during the next legislative session including the assembly considering a permanent moratorium;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen for the City of St. Louis that we support the intent of HB 1496 and we call upon the members of the Missouri General Assembly to reconsider this legislation as well as consider a permanent moratorium on all executions in Missouri.

Introduced on the 13th day of October, 2006 by:

Honorable Terry Kennedy, Alderman 18th Ward
Honorable Freeman Bosley, Sr. Alderman 3rd Ward
Honorable April Ford Griffin, Alderwoman 5th Ward
Honorable Lewis Reed, Alderman 6th Ward
Honorable Phyllis Young, Alderwoman 7th Ward
Honorable Stephen Gregali, Alderman 14th Ward
Honorable Jennifer Florida, Alderwoman 15th Ward
Honorable Bennice Jones King, Alderwoman 21st Ward
Honorable Jeffrey Boyd, Alderman 22nd Ward
Honorable Gregory J. Carter, Alderman 27th Ward
Honorable Lyda Krewson, Alderwoman 28th Ward

Adopted this the _____ day of _____, 2006 as attested:

Patrick J. Connaghan
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

James F. Shrewsbury
President, Board of Aldermen