

PROPOSED DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTATION RESOLUTION

Alameda County Public Protection Committee

October 22, 2026

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Resolution Initiation

The California Anti-Death Penalty Coalition approached PPC Chair Supervisor Elisa Márquez regarding the resolution.

The coalition consists of faith, racial justice, civic, legal and labor organizations, alongside murder victims' families and families affected by the death penalty.

- ACLU
- California Coalition for Women Prisoners
- Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
- NextGen Policy
- Amnesty International
- California Public Defenders Association
- Friends Committee on Legislation
- Smart Justice California
- Bend the Arc
- Catholic Mobilizing network
- Full Picture Justice
- US Campaign to End the Death Penalty
- California Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Death penalty Focus
- League of Women Voters
- Witness to Innocence

Background

California Governor Gavin Newsom halted all death sentences by issuing an **executive moratorium** on **March 13, 2019**

The order grants temporary reprieves to death-row inmates, but it does not commute sentences, release any prisoners, or overturn convictions

“We can no longer allow the death penalty to be a part of what defines us.

- Governor Newsom, 2019”

Alameda County Voters Supported Repeal

Prop 34

(2012)

A "yes" vote supported abolishing the death penalty and replacing it with a maximum life sentence without the opportunity for parole; applying the abolition and new sentencing retroactively; and allocating \$100 million to law enforcement for rape and homicide investigations

62.50% - Yes

37.50% - No

Prop 62

(2016)

A "yes" vote supported abolishing the death penalty and making life without parole the maximum punishment for murder.

62.10% - Yes

37.90% - No

In both elections, a majority of Alameda County voters supported repealing the death penalty.

Source: 2012 and 2016 election results: acvote.alamedacountyca.gov

Today: California's Death Row and Exonerations

560

people currently sentenced to death in California, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, Innocence List (California).

8

men exonerated.

The coalition cites eight California death-row exonerations since 1974, all involving men of color.

Sources: Death Penalty Information Center, Innocence List (California).

Why Alameda County Should Support Clemency Now

1. The voters of Alameda County have twice voted by over 60% to repeal the death penalty. Supporting clemency advances this goal.
2. The death penalty does not reduce violence. It does waste \$150 million each year that could be better spent helping communities through mental health treatment, violence prevention, and victims' services.
3. Almost half of the people currently on California's death row are there for crimes they committed as youth under the age of 26, and approximately one in six were under 21 years old.
4. More than one third of people currently on death row in California have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness and dozens have been diagnosed with intellectual disabilities
5. New Governor

Other Jurisdictions Have Taken Action

City and County of San Francisco

(September 26, 2025)

WHEREAS, San Francisco County has no individuals sentenced to death and the voters of San Francisco have twice voted to repeal the death penalty in 2012 and 2016; and

WHEREAS, The death penalty reflects a legacy of racial discrimination; Sixty-nine percent of the people under a sentence of death in California are people of color, and onethird are Black; and

WHEREAS, Death sentences are more likely to be imposed in California when the victims are white than when they are Black or Latino, while the majority of homicides with Black or Latino victims go unsolved; and

WHEREAS, The California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation recommended abolishing the death penalty as a step to addressing the legacy of slavery in California

City of Los Angeles

(July 1, 2025)

WHEREAS, recent studies, including a 2024 Journal of Empirical Legal Studies article and a 2024 ACLU analysis, illustrate the persistent racial and socioeconomic bias in California capital charging, and sentencing; and

WHEREAS, California's death-penalty system has cost taxpayers well over \$4 billion since 1978—about \$184 million every year above the cost of permanent incarceration without parole—an alternative that is morally wrong and fiscally irresponsible

Recommended Draft Resolution Elements

1. A call for commutation

Urges the Governor to immediately commute the death sentences of all individuals currently sentenced to death in California.

2. Formal delivery to the Governor

Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of the adopted resolution to the Governor.

Next Steps

**Coalition representatives are
available for Q & A**

Summarize Committee feedback for County Counsel

Present resolution to Board of Supervisors