



KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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September 24, 2012

The Honorable Steve Beshear, Governor
700 Capitol Ave., Suite 100
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Governor Beshear:

As you know, the twelve Christian traditions united in the Kentucky Council of Churches work for the day when the death penalty will be repealed in Kentucky. The current juncture is therefore of great concern to us. If a new protocol for executions is approved, you will be approached to sign death warrants. The prospect of a spate of executions, so traumatic in the life of the Commonwealth, is very disturbing. ***We urge you to refrain from signing death warrants.***

Our concerns are heightened by the 2011 report from expert jurists who assessed Kentucky's justice system in the light of dozens of specific practices on which the legal profession agrees. This assessment raised many doubts about the flawed processes by which people have already arrived on death row. It therefore seems unthinkable that this could be a time for proceeding with executions.

In recent years, several state governors have abandoned their striving for a justice system that would be perfect enough to warrant the taking of human life. These states have opted instead for allowing only sentences that protect the public but that do not lead to executions.

Justice is better served by this alternative route. Victim's family members are not forced to relive the trauma again and again while they endure the appeals process. The justice system can be more respected when the public does not suspect the execution of innocent persons or persons disadvantaged by social class or race. State funds can be used to support programs that prevent crime, improve education, and provide services to the families of murder victims, in short to improve life rather than end it. Society can join in affirming that all human life is significant and valuable, indeed sacred and created by God.

You are positioned in this time in Kentucky's history as the leader who will either promote a traumatic new round of public executions or, we pray, put an end to this ever-looming possibility. May God give you wisdom and strength for this and all the weighty issues that come before you.

Sincerely,

Marian Taylor, Executive Director

Michael Ward, Executive Board President

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