



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Statewide Gathering of Anti-Death Penalty Movement in Fort Worth
Two state legislators to receive awards during annual conference

(Austin, Texas) — More than 130 grassroots advocates and supporters from across Texas will gather this Saturday, February 22, 2014 at University Christian Church in Fort Worth for the annual conference of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP). This event, "Lighting the Way," will feature workshops, a keynote address by Bob Ray Sanders of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and a panel discussion on how Texas is lighting the way on the death penalty issue. This is the first time that the TCADP Annual Conference, now in its 16th consecutive year, is taking place in Fort Worth.

During the conference, TCADP will honor two state legislators, presenting the 2014 Courage Award to State Representative Terry Canales (District 40 - Edinburg), in recognition of his public statement in support of ending the death penalty during the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee's hearing on House Bill 1703 by State Representative Jessica Farrar (District 148 – Houston) during the 83rd Texas Legislature Regular Session. House Bill 1703 called for repeal of the death penalty in Texas; it was the fourth such bill introduced by Rep. Farrar since 2007.

State Representative Lon Burnam (District 90 – Fort Worth) will receive the David P. Atwood Founder's Award in recognition of his lifelong commitment to justice and his contributions to abolition and to TCADP both within and outside of the Texas Legislature. The TCADP Board of Directors established the Founder's Award in 2010 to recognize those individuals who have made significant contributions to the cause of ending the death penalty.

TCADP will present Appreciation Awards to longtime members Paula Keeth of Glenn Heights, Maria Castillo of Waxahachie, and Burnham Terrell of Houston (posthumous) in honor of their many activities in support of abolition of the death penalty and efforts to raise awareness of the issue within their communities. Ariana Campos, currently District Manager for State Representative Jessica Farrar, also will receive an Appreciation Award in gratitude for her critical assistance with TCADP's activities in the State Capitol.

"The theme of this year's conference reflects the many shifts that are occurring – some subtle, others dramatic – across our state's criminal justice landscape and on the death penalty issue, in particular," said Kristin Houlé, the Executive Director of TCADP. "Texas actually mirrors national trends when it comes to declining death sentences and is lighting the way in terms of the strength and sophistication of our movement."

In conjunction with the conference, TCADP Board Member Rev. Jeff Hood, Rev. Wes Magruder, Chairman of the Board of Church and Society of the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Lynn Walters, Executive Director of Hope for Peace & Justice, will conduct "A Faithful Pilgrimage to Abolish the Death Penalty from Dallas to Fort Worth" on Friday, February 21, 2014. The approximately 35-mile walk will begin with a press conference at the Dallas County District Attorney's Office in the Frank Crowley Courts Building, 133 N. Riverfront Blvd., L.B. 19, Dallas, Texas 75207 at 8:30 AM and will conclude outside the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office, Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center, 401 West Belknap, Fort Worth, Texas 76196 at approximately 9:00 PM.

Of the pilgrimage, Rev. Jeff Hood remarked, "People of faith go on pilgrimage when their spirits are troubled by the times and there is a desperate need for prayer. We have chosen to walk prayerfully from Dallas to Fort Worth to oppose the cycle of violence in the State of Texas that is perpetuated every time our District Attorneys pursue the death penalty and our government executes someone. We hope to

ignite the moral imagination of our fellow citizens so that we might all rise up together with one courageous voice and declare the death penalty to be no more."

The TCADP 2014 Annual Conference will take place in the Fellowship Hall of University Christian Church, 2720 S. University Dr., Fort Worth, Texas 76109, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The keynote address and awards ceremony will take place from 12:00 to 2:00 PM. All are welcome.

For more information about the conference, visit <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/> or contact Kristin Houlé at the information listed above.

For more information about the faithful pilgrimage from Dallas to Fort Worth or to speak with the participants, please call Rev. Jeff Hood at 404-210-6760.

TCADP is a statewide, grassroots advocacy organization based in Austin.

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