



Fall 2013

Seizing the Momentum

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Two New Reports Shed Light on Flawed Administration, Arbitrary Application of Texas Death Penalty

On September 18, 2013, the American Bar Association's Texas Capital Punishment Assessment Team released the results of its more than two-year study of the fairness and accuracy of the death penalty system in Texas. *The report finds that from top to bottom, the Lone Star State is significantly out of step with practices in other states that allow the death penalty.*

The 500-page report, authored by a team that includes a former governor, former judges, a former prosecutor, practitioners, and legal scholars, recommends numerous reforms to improve accuracy and fairness in the administration of the death penalty in Texas.

These recommendations have been endorsed by the editorial boards of several Texas newspapers, including the *Dallas Morning News*, which called on legislative leaders to "name a joint House-Senate interim committee to sort through the findings and prioritize the most pressing needs for reform." ("Higher Standard for the Ultimate Punishment," September 18, 2013) The *Morning News* noted "Texas, the nation's leading death penalty state by far, therefore has the greatest responsibility to respond where it's a clear outlier on national norms."

It is the Texas Capital Punishment Assessment Team's "unanimous view that so long as Texas imposes the death penalty, its system for doing so must be comprised of sufficient checks and balances to ensure fairness in the selection of offenders to receive the death penalty, reduce to the extent possible the risk of executing the innocent, and preserve public confidence in the administration of criminal justice."

The team's report details countless areas in which the Texas death penalty system "falls far short of this imperative."

Learn more at www.ambar.org/texas.

On the heels of the publication of the ABA Assessment, the Death Penalty Information Center released a compelling new report that illustrates the geographic isolation of the death penalty both in terms of executions and death sentences. *The 2% Death Penalty: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases at Enormous Costs to All* shows that,

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Thank You, Members, Donors, and Partners for Justice!

THE 2% NATIONAL DEATH PENALTY

Although death penalty laws are on the books of 32 states, a small minority of counties are responsible for the majority of executions and the death row population in the United States.

2% of Counties



Produced

52% of All Executions
Since 1976



2% of Counties



Produced

56% of U.S. Death Row



DEATH PENALTY
INFORMATION CENTER

Source: "THE 2% DEATH PENALTY"
For more info, visit deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent

Scheduled Executions

October

9 Michael Yowell

November

12 Jamie McCoskey

December

3 Jerry Martin

Execution Vigils: tcadp.org under
"Get Involved - Stop Executions"



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Last month I put more than 800 miles on my faithful 2000 Jeep Cherokee (including lots of *quality time* on Interstate-35) as I drove around the state to meet with local members and supporters. From Denton to San Antonio – and multiple points in between – I encountered dedicated grassroots advocates and incredible community leaders who are eager to become involved in our efforts to end the death penalty.



Our bi-monthly lunch series in Austin and Houston, regular monthly chapter meetings in Dallas and El Paso, and new organizing committees in Tarrant and Collin Counties are just some of the ways that TCADP is connecting local supporters with each other and with our mission. These efforts are all part of our vision for fulfilling a core priority of our organization: *to provide meaningful and strategic opportunities for membership mobilization and engagement, with an emphasis on growth and diversity.*

Our recent outreach efforts also reinforce our belief that ending the death penalty in Texas must be pursued on a *county-by-county* basis. We've known for a while that within Texas, a minority of jurisdictions account for the majority of executions and death sentences. A new report from the Death Penalty Information Center, featured as our cover story for this issue of *Seizing the Momentum*, provides even more evidence of the geographic isolation of the death penalty and the impact this has on local taxpayers.

In addition to our focus on membership growth and diversity, particularly as we prepare for our 2014 Annual Conference in Fort Worth, the TCADP Board of Directors has designated the following priorities for the coming year:

- Increase the ranks of the TCADP Lobby Corps and provide training and opportunities for engagement in the political process. Established in 2012, this program consists of citizen lobbyists who nurture relationships with legislators throughout the year and play an active role in advancing TCADP's legislative goals during legislative sessions. We are excited about our second class of Lobby Corps members, who we'll be training on November 2 at the State Capitol.
- Identify and cultivate relationships with individuals who identify themselves as politically conservative or who represent traditionally conservative constituencies.
- Release an Interfaith Statement of Opposition to the Death Penalty to the media and elected officials and engage clergy in a Faith Leader Advocacy Day on the Death Penalty in 2015 Texas Legislative Session.
- Organize a series of speaking events involving murder victims' survivors, death row exonorees, and the families of death row inmates or executed individuals in key regions of Texas.

You'll be hearing much more about these priority initiatives and opportunities for your involvement over the coming months. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have ideas or energy for working on any of these programs!

Thank you for supporting our county-by-county efforts to prevent new death sentences, stop executions, and educate and engage local citizens in community conversations about the death penalty. My Jeep and I look forward to our next TCADP road trip!

With gratitude,

TCADP *Seizing the Momentum*

TCADP Seizing the Momentum is published quarterly by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the only statewide grassroots advocacy organization dedicated solely to ending the death penalty in Texas.

Subscription Information: *TCADP Seizing the Momentum* is distributed to TCADP members and allies. To find out more about the organization and become a member, visit our website at www.tcadp.org.

Issue #42, Fall 2013 (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) <http://tcadp.org/get-informed/newsletter-archives/>

Editor/Contributor: Vicki McCuiston Contributors: Kristin Houlé, Pat Monks, D'Lisa Harris-Abbott, Jean Parks, Judy Holloway

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Look for TCADP on Social Media sites you use: YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+, Facebook, and Twitter!



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(Affiliation listed for identification purposes only.)

Volunteers

Thanks so much to the following individuals who have volunteered in the TCADP Office or provided administrative support in recent months: Dorothy Ruelas (Translation), Jean & Tom Egan, Jess Stoner



Calendar of Events

October

5: San Antonio: Respect Life Mass and For Life Fair, St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, 8:00am – 12:00pm
9: Scheduled Execution – Michael Yowell
10: World Day Against the Death Penalty event - KPFT Radio Houston 7-9:00pm
11: Exhibition and Reception for "Living Condition", Oak Cliff Cultural Center, Dallas, 7:00pm
12: Dallas Video Fest, Alamo Drafthouse -Richardson
15: Dallas Chapter meeting – at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Rd, Room CLC 196 at 6:30pm, dallas@tcadp.org (Note new location!)
21: El Paso Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, St Pius X Catholic Church, 1050 N Clark St. elpaso@tcadp.org
22: Kristin Houlé presentation to classes at Houston Community College, Katy and SE Fraga Campuses
23: Austin: Film Screening "Meeting with a Killer" and panel discussion, 6:00pm
25-26: University of Dallas Ministry Conference
28: Austin: Film Showing "Dead Man Walking" and discussion, 6:30pm St. Albert the Great Catholic Church, 12401 Bittern Hollow, Palermo Center Bldg.-Seminar Room – all are welcome!

November

1: *I am Troy Davis* speaker and book signing, 7pm UT Austin
2: Lobby Corps Training, Austin; Memorial Service for 3000 inmates at Captain Joe Byrd Cemetery, Huntsville
12: Houston Fair and Just Lunch Series, St. Anne's Catholic Church, 12:30-1:30pm
13: Austin Lunch Meeting and Discussion, Clay Pit Restaurant, 1601 Guadalupe, 11:50 to 1:00pm
17: Houston: Archbishop Fiorenza will celebrate the 11am Mass and give a homily on the death penalty at the Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral, in solidarity with the *Cities for Life...Cities Against the Death Penalty* program sponsored by the Sant' Egidio Community in Rome, Italy
18: El Paso Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, elpaso@tcadp.org; Barry Scheck speaks at the Houston Progressive Forum 7:30pm
19: Dallas Chapter meeting 7:00pm, dallas@tcadp.org
21: Presentation to Dallas LULAC Rainbow Council

December

Look for the TCADP Annual Report to be released!
7: Dallas - Annual Christmas Card Signing for Death Row inmates, 11:00 to 4:00 in the History Department Conference Room, basement of Dallas Hall at SMU.
16: El Paso Chapter Meeting, 7:00pm, elpaso@tcadp.org
17: Dallas Chapter meeting 7:00pm, dallas@tcadp.org
Full event descriptions can be found at www.tcadp.org under "Get Involved - Attend Events".
Vigil Locations on Days of Execution can be found at www.tcadp.org under "Get Involved - Stop Executions"



Working with Murder Victim Family Members

Jean Parks - MVFR Member

Many people expect that family members of murder victims will favor the death penalty as suitable punishment for taking the life of a loved one. As a consequence, family members who oppose the death penalty can be powerful voices in campaigns to end capital punishment. Family members have played prominent roles in abolition efforts in the last five states which repealed the death penalty: New Jersey, New Mexico, Illinois, Connecticut, and Maryland.

Members of the repeal movement are sometimes unsure about how to incorporate homicide survivors into their work. How should you talk to people who have been so intimately involved in murder and sentencing? As a family member who has been active in death penalty repeal work, I would like to offer some guidelines for talking to murder victims' families. These personal observations are based on experiences in North Carolina where survivors have been respectfully and effectively integrated into reform and repeal efforts.

Most survivors will not enter into repeal work when they are still in the early stages of grief and are still emotionally fragile. However, when survivors are ready to engage in repeal work most will appreciate sensitivity and support that other volunteers do not need.

When they learn that my sister was murdered, some people are afraid to approach me, not knowing what to say, fearing that they will say something wrong. The best thing to say is usually, "I'm sorry for your loss." Despite your urge to comfort or reassure a survivor, don't offer philosophical or religious platitudes such as, "Life just isn't fair," or "God only gives us what we can handle."

When you meet a survivor, take time to listen. Each of us has a unique story of loss, and it can be part of the healing process to tell that story. Ask the survivor to tell you about his or her loved one and how life has changed since the murder. Ask if the case has been solved and how the survivor feels about the law enforcement response, the judicial system and the media. For some families, the trauma of the murder was heightened by the way the case was handled or reported.

Ask how each survivor arrived at his or her beliefs and feelings about the death penalty. Expect that members of the same family may feel differently about capital punishment. These differences can be a source of sadness and tension within families. Avoid any implication that survivors who oppose the death penalty are "good" survivors and those who support the death penalty are "bad" survivors.

Develop relationships over time. A survivor may not be ready to join the repeal movement when you first meet, but may become active later. Remember each family's story. Use the names of our loved ones when you talk with us. Many of us believe our work for death penalty reform and repeal is a way of honoring our loved ones.

Make us full partners in the effort for repeal, not just token victims brought to the microphone when you need an emotional punch. Ask us for ideas about how to craft messages or approach lawmakers. Notice and use our individual gifts: who speaks eloquently, who writes persuasive columns for the paper, who prefers to work behind the scenes. Keep us informed about important developments.

As you do with all volunteers, encourage survivors to stay involved in the movement. Show appreciation for our efforts. Let us know when our words and actions have an impact. Provide opportunities for us to get to know the staff and other members. Feed us; laugh and have fun with us! The truth is, all of us who are murder victims' family members were ordinary people before the murders, and we are still just ordinary folks.

We all have much to gain when you welcome murder victim family members to join your efforts to abolish the death penalty. When you engage survivors with respect and care, you not only enhance your movement, you empower us to add our voices to a life-giving message.



Pictured: L to R, Sister Helen Prejean and Jean Parks



Jean Parks has been a member of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) since 2007. She lived in San Antonio from 1984-2003 and started the San Antonio Chapter of Parents of Murdered Children during that time. Her sister, Betsy Rosenberg, was murdered in 1975 in Raleigh, NC. Jean now lives near Asheville, NC and is a psychologist and pastoral counselor. MVFR is a national organization of murder victim family members who oppose the death penalty.



Executions

Texas has carried out 14 out of 31 executions nationwide so far in 2013. There have been 506 executions in Texas since 1982. Two additional executions are scheduled to take place this year.

In September, officials with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) announced that although their current supply of pentobarbital had expired, they had no plans to change the lethal injection protocol. At the time, officials did not disclose the source of the drugs they are now using in executions in Texas. Attorneys for three death row inmates filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking full disclosure from TDCJ as to the source and nature of the drugs they plan to use in future executions. It then came to light that TDCJ obtained pentobarbital from a local compounding pharmacy, which demanded its return in the wake of negative publicity. On October 9, after the courts refused to intervene, Michael Yowell became the first Texas inmate put to death using compounded drugs.

Death Sentences

On July 16, 2013, the jury in the capital murder trial of Albert Love, Jr., sentenced him to death for the 2011 murders of Kennan Hubert, 20, and Tyler Sneed, 17, in Waco. Love is the second of two men convicted in the shooting deaths. Last year, a McLennan County jury sentenced Ricky Cummings to death for his role in the crime; media coverage of Cummings' trial resulted in Love's trial being moved to Williamson County. A third defendant, Darvis Cummings, Ricky Cummings' brother, has also been charged with capital murder for his role in the shooting; his trial has not yet begun. Texas juries have handed down a total of six death sentences to date in 2013.

Jury Rejections

On July 11, 2013, an Austin County jury determined that Maron Thomas should spend the rest of his life in prison for the 2010 capital murders of his brother and sister, Cedric Thomas and Kiana Phearse, in Buckhorn. The District Attorney's office had sought the death penalty for Thomas – its first death penalty case in 25 years – but the jury decided that there was mitigating evidence that warranted a life sentence. This was the first of three indictments against Thomas, who pled not guilty by reason of insanity. He has also been charged with killing his mother and stepfather, Debra and George Washington, and his two-year old niece, Khalilah Chambers-Massey.

Updates on Other Cases

- In September, the Travis County District Attorney's Office announced that it does not intend to seek another death sentence for Cathy Lynn Henderson, who will be retried on charges of capital murder in the death of three-month-old Brandon Baugh in 1994. Henderson was granted a new trial last year by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (CCA) based on scientific advances that cast doubts upon expert testimony regarding the baby's cause of death. If she is convicted, Henderson faces a sentence of life in prison. The date of her new trial has not been set. This leaves eight women on death row in Texas. Henderson was just two days away from being executed in 2007 when the CCA granted a stay and ordered an evidentiary hearing.
- A ruling by the CCA on September 11, 2013 found that a state district judge does not have the authority to order Texas death row inmate Steven Staley to be forcibly medicated in order to render him competent to be executed. Staley, who was convicted of the 1989 murder of Robert Read at a Fort Worth restaurant, has been on death row since 1991; he was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic soon after he arrived. At times over the last few years, he has been forced to take anti-psychotic drugs against his will. Staley believes that the drugs are poisoning him. The court's ruling did not address the issue of whether there are any circumstances that allow inmates to be forcibly medicated to be executed.
- In August, the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Texas death row inmate Scott Panetti is competent to be executed. Panetti was convicted and sentenced to death for the 1992 murder of his in-laws, Joe and Amanda Alvarado. Kerr County District Judge Stephen Ables allowed Panetti to represent himself despite his long, documented history of paranoid schizophrenia and frequent hospitalizations. The 5th Circuit, which considers cases from Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, has never found a death row inmate incompetent to be executed. At this time, Panetti does not have an execution date.
- On September 27, 2013, relatives for Cameron Todd Willingham filed an amended petition with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles asking the state to posthumously pardon him. Willingham was executed in 2004 for the arson murder of his three daughters, despite compelling evidence of his innocence. Family members urged the state to conduct an investigation into Willingham's wrongful execution based on newly discovered evidence that points to possible false testimony at his trial and possible prosecutorial misconduct.



contrary to the assumption that the death penalty is widely used nationwide, only a few jurisdictions actually employ capital punishment extensively. In fact, just 2% of U.S. counties are responsible for the majority of cases leading to executions since 1976.

Here are some key findings as they pertain to Texas, where a minority of jurisdictions accounts for the majority of executions and death sentences:

- Nine counties in Texas are among the top 15 U.S. counties by execution since 1976: (in order) Harris; Dallas; Tarrant; Bexar; Montgomery; Jefferson; Brazos; Nueces; and Potter.
- Harris, Dallas, Tarrant and Bexar counties account for almost half of the executions in Texas, while representing 34% of the state's population.
- Harris County is second only to Los Angeles County (California) in terms of the number of current death row inmates (98).
- In 2005, Houston had 8% more murders than Dallas, but 324% more death row inmates; it had 15% more murders than San Antonio, but 430% more death row inmates.

The report describes how aggressive use of the death penalty in relatively few counties produces enormous costs that are shifted to taxpayers in the entire state. In addition, significant legal errors are often more prevalent in those counties that sentence the most people to death.

According to research by TCADP, just five counties account for more than half of the new death sentences imposed by Texas juries since 2008. The latest information on death sentences, executions, and other developments in 2013 will be provided in TCADP's annual report, which will be released in early December.

You can read the full report from DPIC at <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent>. Log onto Facebook and Twitter to contribute to the conversation about how this information impacts your county.

Are you aware of regional or local civic and religious conferences/festivals that allow exhibitors?

Share these opportunities with TCADP so we can continue to reach new people! info@tcadp.org or 512-441-1808

Follow TCADP on TWITTER!

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Breaking news, coming events, things you should know! RETWEET!



Take Action Today!

Cameron Todd Willingham was wrongly executed in 2004. 9 experts say he was innocent. Tell Texas it's time to investigate. [Learn more! http://bit.ly/1gkGqJl](http://bit.ly/1gkGqJl)

Duane Buck- Have you heard of Duane Buck? His death sentence hinged on testimony from a psychologist who testified because he is Black, he was more likely to be dangerous. Sign the petition urging the Harris County District Attorney's Office to agree to a new, fair sentencing hearing. [Sign and Share today! http://chn.ge/17u09Ng](http://chn.ge/17u09Ng)

New TCADP Resources in Spanish

The Texas Death Penalty 4 page fact sheet, updated regularly, is now available in Spanish, along with translations of a fact sheet on the Carlos DeLuna case, and our popular 5 question pop quiz on the death penalty. To request hard copies for outreach efforts, call 512-441-1808 or email info@tcadp.org. The documents are available for download at <http://tcadp.org/get-informed/texas-death-penalty-facts/>.

TCADP Member Spotlight: D'Lisa Harris-Abbott Weatherford, Texas

Page 7, Fall 2013



Having grown up in Texas, I honestly never gave the death penalty much thought. I just thought it was for horrible people who did horrible things. In 2002, my nephew's Army recruiter, Cleve "Sarge" Foster, was tried and convicted (under the law of parties) of capital murder, and was sentenced to death. I assumed he would never be executed. That's how little I knew of what was going on with executions in Texas.

In January 2011 my sister called one morning and said they're killing Sarge today. I knew this person before his trial and conviction. He helped my sister and her sons. He was in our lives. Why would he be executed? This person I'd known from years before? He received a stay that afternoon and subsequently 3 more execution dates and 2 stays.

My nephew and I went down to Livingston in September 2011 (3rd scheduled execution) for what I thought would be the first and last visit I would have with him there. He was granted a stay that day. When I saw "Our Sarge" in that steel box and I had to speak to him via the phone--- the death penalty had a 'face' to me. My journey began that day. I KNEW it was wrong to kill a human being. I KNEW Thou Shalt Not Kill.

He and I continued to correspond through letters and JPay. I visited him in Polunsky several more times before his execution. He and I came up with the name Team Sarge for his supporters—he had so many. Sarge gave me lists of organizations and people to contact to become involved with. I contacted Kristin with TCADP early on as I had NO idea about anything relating to this cause and she was so kind and helpful to me! That began my involvement with TCADP.

I made acquaintances with folks from around the world. I even read 'Dead Man Walking' so I could know what feelings to expect if my friend was ever executed. Unfortunately, he was executed September 25, 2012. Standing outside the death house with his close friends and supporters aka TEAM SARGE, I realized JUST how awful the whole idea of the death penalty is; how it affected his family and friends around the world. Our lives forever changed that day.

The fact that there have been people exonerated of the crimes they were on death row for... proved to me the system is fallible and biased. We cannot continue to murder anyone 'legally.' Legally, there are just too many what if's---to validate any reason for the death penalty. Such as inadequate counsel, if a person is not represented the BEST they can be... how is that justice?

I do see progress in the number of decreasing death sentences and increased questioning of inadequate counsel. I have also been more vocal of my opinion so there is opportunity to share with the public the MANY different reasons the death penalty should be stopped. I made Sarge a promise to become an advocate to abolish this horrible practice of the death penalty and I believe TCADP is the place where I can help that come to fruition. I'm so excited the TCADP 2014 convention will be in Fort Worth and very proud to be involved with this organization.



Join D'Lisa and become a member of TCADP, or renew today!

Commit to a future without the death penalty!

Name/Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address (Help us verify that we have your current email address!) _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

- ☐ \$100 Annual Organization Membership
- ☐ \$60 Annual Household Membership
- ☐ \$40 Annual Individual Membership
- ☐ \$15 Annual Student/Restricted Income Membership
- ☐ Sustaining Membership (Renews Annually)*
- ☐ \$_____ Additional donation for TCADP

☐ I want to be a Partner for Justice*

Make my donation of _____ (minimum \$10) recur on a

☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ annual basis.

*Credit/Debit Cards only—www.tcadp.org/donate/partners-for-justice/

Credit/Debit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Credit Card - ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Make a difference.
DONATE

Please make checks out to TCADP. All donations are tax deductible and should be mailed to: TCADP; 2709 S. Lamar; Suite 109; Austin, TX 78704. A secure online donation can be made through the TCADP website: www.tcadp.org (click on "Donate"). **THANK YOU!**



TCADP Welcomes New Members to the Board of Directors

Rev. Jeff Hood. A theologian, historian, and bioethicist by academic training, Jeff is a graduate of Auburn University, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Emory University's Candler School of Theology, the University of Alabama, Creighton University, and he is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry in Practical Theology at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University. Jeff's ordination rests within the Southern Baptist Convention. A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Jeff currently lives in Denton, Texas, where he serves as pastor of The Church at Mable Peabody's and Moderator of the Denton Fellowship of Reconciliation. Jeff is married to Emily and they are the proud parents of twin infant sons, Jeff and Phillip. In addition to education, work, and family, Jeff maintains a close relationship with Texas Death Row inmate Will Speer. Jeff is also the author of two books and the compiler of a book of stories. In all of these things, Jeff prides himself on being "a committed activist theologian, visionary writer and radical prophetic voice to a closed society."



Aftab Siddiqui. Aftab has been actively involved with the Dallas Peace Center for the last 10 years, serving as Co-Chair of the Save Pakistan Committee, which is working to stop drone attacks in Pakistan, and currently as Co-Chair of the Human Rights at Home Committee, which works on a host of issues including civil liberty and immigration reform. He is the Chair of the Muslim Community Center for Human Services, a nonprofit that provides charitable health and social services. Aftab also volunteers with the United Way of Tarrant County and sat on the Cabinet and Health Impact Council. He is a Member of the Executive Committee of the Tarrant County Democratic Party and played a key role in organizing the Ballot Box Barbecue (2002) and Civil Rights Conferences (2003, 2004, and 2005); he is currently the President of the Muslim Democratic Caucus of Texas. Prior to migrating to the United States in 1993, Aftab played a key role in establishing an Amnesty International Chapter in Pakistan, where he was involved in campaigns against human rights violations and the death penalty.



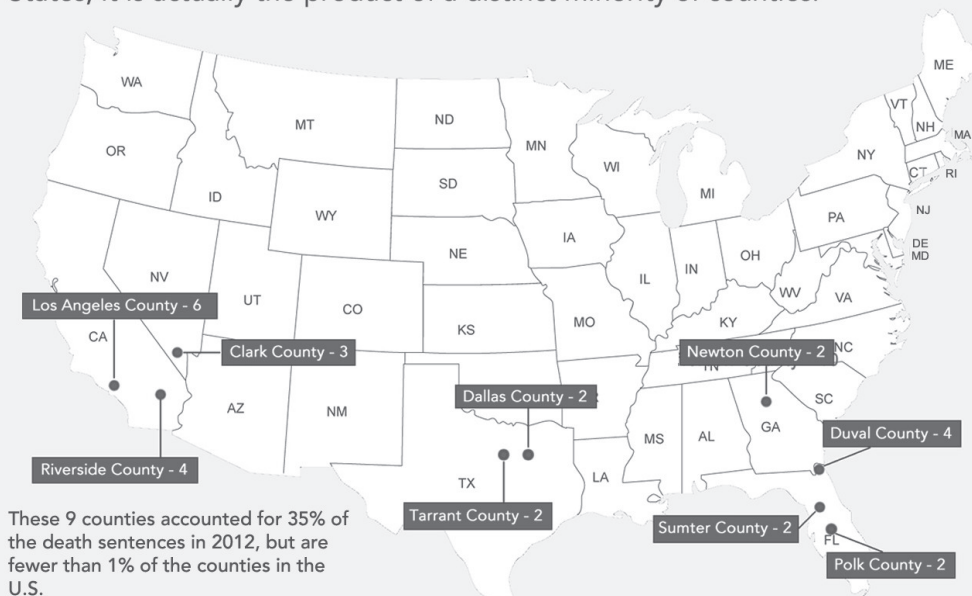
Aftab worked for 16 years at American Airlines until his retirement in 2012; he was deeply involved with the Diversity Initiative at work. He is currently working with Dallas County Schools as a Routing Specialist. Aftab also worked in production management and taught as an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Karachi. He has completed his BS (Elect), MBA, and MPA (UT Arlington) and lives in Arlington.

The new members are filling vacant positions on the Board and will be approved for full terms by TCADP members at the TCADP Annual Conference to be held February 22 in Fort Worth, Texas.

www.tcadp.org/cowtown/

LEADING COUNTIES IN DEATH SENTENCES 2012

Contrary to the perception that the death penalty is widely used in the United States, it is actually the product of a distinct minority of counties.



DPIC DEATH PENALTY
INFORMATION CENTER

Source: "THE 2% DEATH PENALTY"
For more info, visit deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent

An interesting infographic from the DPIC Report: *The 2% Death Penalty: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases at Enormous Costs to All*

News from the Field

Here's a snapshot of activities that TCADP staff, Board and Advisory Board members, and local members have sponsored or participated in since July:

In **July**, TCADP Board President Angelle Adams spoke to the Calhoun County Democrats in Port Lavaca, while Board Member Mike Renquist represented TCADP in the panel discussion that followed University United Methodist Church's screening of the film "Incendiary" in Austin.

In **August**, TCADP members volunteered at information booths at festivals and conferences throughout the state, including the 6th Texas Greek Picnic in Houston and with the Catholic Mobilizing Network at the Hispanic Congress of the Americas for Respect Life and Evangelization, which took place in Plano. Also that month, El Pasoans Against the Death Penalty helped to organize a screening of the film "Juan Melendez – 6446" (Spanish version) at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. A fifth parish in El Paso, St. Luke's, is now holding vigils on the evenings of executions in Texas.

In **September**, TCADP members gathered in Allen, Austin, College Station, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio to hear from speakers – including state legislators, capital defense attorneys, and an expert on restorative justice – and to share ideas for increasing visibility for the death penalty issue in their communities. We met in private homes, at restaurants and churches, and at the beautiful Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. We are grateful to all of our guest speakers and to the local members who helped organize these events! Please make plans now to participate in your next TCADP community gathering – check the calendar of events on page 3 and www.tcadp.org for dates and details.

Earlier in the month, TCADP Advisory Board Member Sister Helen Prejean, the author of *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty*, spoke at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Lewisville, Texas. She discussed the 20th anniversary of the book's publication and her work as one of the nation's most prominent critics of the death penalty.

Another Advisory Board Member, Anthony Graves, participated in the September 18 press conference announcing the results of the American Bar Association's assessment of the Texas death penalty. Anthony provided a powerful, personal witness regarding the need to improve the accuracy and fairness of our state's death penalty system, noting that if any of the ABA's recommended reforms had been in place 20 years ago, he would not have been wrongfully convicted and sent to death row for a crime he didn't commit.

To date in **October**, TCADP has contributed information about the Texas death penalty to a Respect Life Mass and For Life Fair sponsored by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, while members in El Paso have engaged in numerous religious outreach activities. Houston abolitionists organized an event commemorating World Day Against the Death Penalty on October 10, which took place at KPFT Radio.

On October 12, TCADP Vice President Estrus Tucker participated in a panel discussion following a screening of "Living Condition," an animated documentary that tells the true stories of four families living with a relative condemned to execution. This event took place as part of the Dallas Video Fest at the Alamo Drafthouse in Richardson. Michael Morton also attended the festival for the screening of "An Unreal Dream: The Michael Morton Story," which chronicles the 25 years he spent in prison before DNA evidence exonerated him of the murder of his wife.

Later this month, TCADP Executive Director Kristin Houle will speak to two classes at Houston Community College (Katy and SE Fraga Campuses as part of the Secular Student Initiative), volunteers will participate in the University of Dallas Ministry Conference, and St. Albert the Great Catholic Church in Austin will show the film "Dead Man Walking."

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**Look for TCADP on
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See photos of activities and links to
important news developments.**

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TCADP Board Member Pat Monks attends Ohioans to Stop Executions 25th Anniversary Membership Conference

Last February, I met Kevin Werner, the Executive Director of Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE), when he attended our TCADP Conference in Austin. He invited me to attend their conference on October 5th at Ohio Dominican University. I participated in my capacity as a member of TCADP, with the intent of learning how the grass may be greener in other pastures.

I was greeted by Kevin and 70 enthusiastic attendees from all over the state of Ohio, along with Scott Bass of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation and Abe Bonowitz, a long-time leader in the abolition movement.

The conference was divided into two main panel discussions, with separate breakout sessions for the morning and afternoon. The morning session focused on the perspective and needs of murder victims' families, featuring a panel of victims' families from Ohio. We then broke into sessions to discuss restorative justice. Here I met and spoke with Joe D'Ambrosio, who is a recent Death Row exoneree. Joe was sent to death row in 1989 at the age of 26 and spent 22 years there before being released. He is an active member of OTSE, participating in the Journey of Hope in Ohio and Indiana and going on tour with the *One for Ten* documentary film screenings in October.

During lunch, Tim Young, the director of the Office of the Ohio Public Defender, spoke about the review process of Ohio's death penalty system, which has been underway since November 2011. The Chief Judge of Ohio's Supreme Court set up the task force as a result of the American Bar Association's assessment of Ohio's death penalty. The final report of the task force is expected to be released in early 2014. It was clear that some very good changes to Ohio's death penalty system will be discussed by legislators.

The afternoon session focused on the state of the Death Penalty nationwide. Naturally, the State of Texas came into the picture. After saying the Texas State flag pledge, I let the group know of all the good work we have accomplished in Texas.

I felt my purpose in Ohio was to let them know that they weren't alone. Their issues are our issues, though there are some nuanced differences. ... It was clear they had some accomplishments to be proud of and what we dream of in Texas. I felt like a cheerleader that was able to bring a positive fresh perspective to such a negative issue. Our colleagues in other states have the same passion and energy for this issue as we have in Texas. We are all in it together.

Vigil Locations tcadp.org under "Get Involved"

Huntsville (Location of Executions) Corner of 12th and Ave. I (in front of Walls Unit) at 5:15 pm

Austin (Site 1) - On Congress at 11 St., 5:30 - 6:30 pm, **(Site 2)** - Prayer vigil at St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic Church on Olton and Congress at 6:00pm (approx 20 minutes)

Beaumont Diocese of Beaumont, Diocesan Pastoral Office, 703 Archie St. @ 4:00 pm on the day of an execution

Brownsville 802 and Paredes Lane from 4:30 -5:30pm

College Station 5:30 to 6 pm, east of Texas A&M campus at the corner of Walton and Texas Ave. across the street from the main entrance

Corpus Christi Sisters Of Incarnate Word Convent, 2930 Alameda, 6:00 pm

Cuero At Gazebo on Main Street, next to Library, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-676-2921

Dallas - 6:00 p.m. at Interfaith Peace Chapel at the Cathedral of Hope 5910 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas

El Paso 6:00pm **(Site 1)** Saint Patrick Cathedral, 1118 N Mesa St, **(Site 2)** Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 131 S Zaragosa Rd, **(Site 3)** Our Lady of Guadalupe 2709 Alabama, and **(Site 4)** St. Pius X Hope Chapel, 1050 N Clark. **(Site 5)** St. Luke's Church, 930 E. Redd Rd.

Ganado At Assumption Catholic Church Pro-Life Monument, 5:45 pm Public invited. For information call 361-771-3325

Houston Rotating Locations... October—December—Dominican Sisters Community at Holcombe and Alameda Aves. from 5:30 to 6:20pm

Lubbock St. John's United Methodist Church, 1501 University Ave., 5:30 to 6:30 pm

McAllen In front of The Monitor, corner of Nolana and Jackson at 5:30 pm

McKinney St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Community located at 110 St. Gabriel Way, the last Sunday of the month, following the 11:00 mass to remember those scheduled for execution in the following month, as well as the victims of their crimes and family members on both sides.

Odessa Vigils on hold for the time being.

San Antonio (Site 1) - Archdiocese of San Antonio, in the St. Joseph Chapel at the Chancery, 2718 W. Woodlawn Ave. (1 mile east of Bandera Rd.) at 11:30 am on the day of execution. Broadcast on Catholic Television of San Antonio (Time-Warner cable channel 15) at 12:30 pm and 6:30 pm on the day of execution. **(Site 2)** - Main Plaza across from Bexar County Courthouse and San Fernando Cathedral - Noon **(Site 3)** - Join the Sisters of Divine Providence and friends in vigil and prayer from 6:00 - 6:30 pm on Texas execution days in front of Our Lady of the Lake Convent by the large crucifix. 515 S.W. 24th Street

Spring Prayer Vigil at 6 pm on evenings of executions at St Edward Catholic Community, 2601 Spring Stuebner Rd, Spring, TX 77389 for the murder victim, for family and friends of the murder victim, the prison guards and correctional officers, for the family of the condemned man/woman, for the man/woman to be executed and to an end to the death penalty

Victoria At Incarnate Word Convent, 5:45 pm. Public Invited. For information call 361-575-7111

Are you participating in a vigil that isn't listed above? Please email the location and time details to info@tcadp.org to be included!



Thank You for Your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following individuals and organizations for their generous contributions in the past quarter (July 20 through October 21, 2013). Your financial assistance is critical to all of the activities and events described in this newsletter! Please let us know if we have inadvertently left you or your spouse/partner off of this list. We apologize in advance if we missed anyone.

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Avoid those annoying dues renewal notices, save a stamp, and support TCADP - all in five minutes! Just go to www.tcadp.org and click on Donate to get started.

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TCADP 2014 Annual Conference: "Lighting the Way"

Saturday, February 22, 2014

University Christian Church 8:00am - 5:30pm
2720 S University Dr., Fort Worth, Texas

www.tcadp.org/cowtown

SAVE THE DATE!

Registration information online at
www.tcadp.org/cowtown
or contact
the TCADP office at
512-441-1808 for assistance.

- Annual Awards
- General Membership Meeting
- Workshops
- Keynote Speaker — Bob Ray Sanders,
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
- Networking
- Exhibitors and Door Prizes

Conference Registration

Early, Early Bird by January 1, 2014:

TCADP Member \$45, Non-Member \$55
Student \$20

Advance Registration by February 1, 2014:

TCADP Member \$50, Non-Member \$60
Student \$25

After February 1, 2014:

TCADP Member \$60, Non-Member \$70
Student \$25

Registration fee includes Continental Breakfast and Lunch

Lunch Only Option — Keynote and Awards

12:30—2:00pm (Must Purchase by February 15) — \$25
Sponsor a table for 6 — \$150

Springhill Suites—Marriot Hotel—Ft Worth
February 21 and 22, 2014, \$109 a night.

Deadline for booking: February 1.