

**TEXAS RABBIS' AND CANTORS' STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO THE DEATH
PENALTY**

We acknowledge that the Bible permits and even imposes the death penalty for certain situations. Yet the Talmud, the most authoritative Jewish work of Jewish law and practice today, severely limits the possibility of executing criminals, even murderers, and makes its application nearly impossible.

In the Talmud, the Rabbis observe that a court that executes a criminal even once in 70 years is a bloody court. Thus it is clear that Rabbis of the Talmud considered capital punishment to be repugnant, even though they could not completely abolish it because of its Biblical precedent.

Embracing this Rabbinic perspective, the State of Israel does not impose the death penalty, even for terrorists who have murdered countless numbers of its citizens. In its 64-year history, it has executed only one criminal, Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi leader responsible for the deaths of millions of Jews during the Holocaust.

We also have learned that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime and that the possibility of error in mistaken executions is exceedingly great. Because our Jewish tradition emphasizes the sanctity of human life, we are convinced such sanctity, already violated by murder, is not enhanced by capital punishment.

Therefore, we, the Rabbis and Cantors of Texas, representing diverse Jewish denominations, vigorously oppose the death penalty and strongly support its abolition in Texas.

Signed,

Rabbi Benjamin Sternman
Adat Chaverim
Plano, Texas

Rabbi Brian Zimmerman
Union for Reform Judaism
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Stephen Fisch
Congregation Beth El Binah
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Andrew Paley
Temple Shalom
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Ana Bonnheim
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Nancy Ann Kasten
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Asher Knight
Temple Emanu-El
Dallas, Texas

Rabbi Neal Katz
Congregation Beth El
Tyler, Texas

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker
Congregation Beth Israel
Colleyville, Texas

Rabbi Jordan Ottenstein
Beth-El Congregation
Fort Worth, Texas

Rabbi Laura Schwartz Harari
Temple Rodef Sholom
Waco, Texas

Rabbi Anne Belford
Temple Sinai
Houston, Texas

Rabbi David Lyon
Congregation Beth Israel
Houston, Texas

Rabbi Joshua Taub
Temple Emanuel
Beaumont, Texas

Rabbi David Komerofsky
Associate Vice President for Advancement
at Hillel
San Antonio, Texas

Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl
Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Beth- El
San Antonio, Texas

Rabbi Susan Elizabeth Lippe
Bible Student, Rabbi-Educator
Austin, Texas

Rabbi Samuel Rose
Congregation Beth Israel
Austin, Texas

Rabbi Amy B. Cohen
Temple Beth Shalom
Austin, Texas

Rabbi Rebecca Epstein
Congregation Beth Israel
Austin, Texas

Rabbi Kerry Baker
Everybody Needs a Rabbi.com
Austin, Texas

Rabbi Larry Bach
Temple Mount Sinai
El Paso, Texas